

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

[THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 602.—VOL. XXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 5, 1876.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE SILENT WITNESS.]

FADING AWAY.

PROLOGUE.

Yet all in vain, for never spring arraying
Nature in charms to thee can make it fair;
Ill-fated love clouds all thy path portraying,
Years past of bliss and future of despair.

OUT from the gloomy shadow of an obscure corner, out into the badly-lighted street, darkened by the chill, heavy mist of a starless, soundless night, steals a slender, child-like figure, with white, thin hands, with thin and whiter face, and garments that hung in flickering tatters, leaving almost bare the young and tender limbs of the little night wanderer.

On she flits, haggard and ghostly, her tiny, shoeless feet patterning, with feeble, tottering steps, along the damp, cold pavement. On still, until, passing into one of the worst thoroughfares in the vicinity of St. Martin's Lane, her gait grew unsteady, the poor, pale face glanced from side to side of the now deserted street, and quite weary and exhausted, or lost in the purloins of a strange locality, she let her head droop, her eyes closed, and staggering against the shutters of a miserable shop, stood still, undisturbed by the dreary quietude of a more dreary night.

Then the head sank lower, the face was buried in the poor thin hands, and down upon the darkened ground beneath her feet rolled the glittering tears, wrung from the fountain of sorrow by the agony, the misery of that poor little heart, so young, and yet so weary.

The silence—but once broken, and then only by the St. Martin's Church clock pealing out the solitary hour of one—now caught the faint and varying echoes of a firm footfall—the footfall of a man.

Rapidly he came through the dirty, tainted street, and as rapidly approached the weeping child, who, now aware of his presence, and fearful lest, in standing against that shopfront, she should be doing wrong, stood up, and again pattered slowly on.

By the yellow, sickly flicker of a street lamp, she saw the stranger was a man of gentlemanly appearance, but with a stern, dark face, and fierce, gleaming eyes.

But young as she was, she had learned to know that the hearts of men could not always be judged by the expression on their faces, and turning her large, full eyes up to his, she paused to speak and to beg.

"Oh, sir!" she said, with the tears still standing in her eyes, and a piteous quaver in the meek, childish voice "please, please do take pity on me! My poor mother is dying, sir, dying from want!"

The man paused, and fixed his now cold eyes upon the pale, pinched face of the little suppliant; but she never flinched.

There was no canting hypocrisy in that face; no deceit in that aching heart.

There was to her no shame in having to beg for what she could get no other way to save a loving mother from death.

Anger and doubt left the hard, stern face of the sterner man then, and following the first good impulse of Christian charity, he gave help to the little night wanderer, and spoke in a voice that was kind, and could be gentle to a child.

"Who are you? Why do you prowl the streets at this hour of the morning?"

"They call me Little Phoebe, sir. I have been out since dark, and would have gone home but have got nothing to take to my mother."

She spoke simply, truthfully; devotion for her mother had given her strength to battle with the bitter misery of the streets, at the sacrifice of the young life.

The hard, sunburnt face of the man grew softer, and a shiver went through his frame as he looked upon the pretty, plaintive, upturned face of Little Phoebe.

"What is your other name, child?"

"Ellis, sir—Phoebe Ellis."

And then the stranger gave a start.

"What is your mother's name, besides Ellis?" he asked, in a thick whisper.

"Ada, sir."

And Phoebe saw that his cheeks blanched, and he gasped as though the pronunciation of that name had been a dagger-thrust.

"Where do you live, Phoebe—Little Phoebe? Will you show me?"

How quiet—how subdued—had grown the voice now! It fell upon Phoebe's ears with a strange, winning gentleness that made her poor little heart fill well nigh to bursting.

"Oh, sir, please, you would never like to come!"

"Why not, child?"

"It's such a poor, very poor place."

"Never mind, Little Phoebe. Let me see where you live, for your mother's sake."

How gladly—how readily—the poor little child led the way there! For her mother's sake! What would she not have done for her mother's sake? Have suffered death—death in its worst shape—and without a murmur.

"Did your mother send you out to beg?" asked the stranger.

And some of the proud coldness came back to his voice.

"No, sir, never! Poor, dear mother cries now—always cries when she sees me, because I have gone begging ever since mother began to die."

"Your mother began to die? How long is that?"

"Ever so long, sir. But she did work to keep us, but she can't now, only lies in bed. Oh, so silent,

sir; never complains or says she is hungry, and when I get food, won't eat until I cry so, because my heart aches for her. Mother says her aches for me; but I am sure it can't ache more than mine; because I love her so very, very much. Ah, sir, if you could save her from dying!"

A soundless sort of sobbing gulf the tall stranger gave then, and his large, though handsome, hand sought the child's uncovered head, and he touched it lightly, but did not speak again.

On through many of the dark, unwholesome winding narrow streets the little guide led him, until they reached one more remote and poverty-stricken than the rest.

Here the heavy, gloomy mist that shrouded the earth seemed to ly thicker and more impure than in the better localities. The rickety, irregular built houses seemed to shrink back in the darkened haze, as though to hide their wretchedness, decay, and dilapidation from the eyes of the passersby.

The stranger, as he walked moodily and silently on, let his mind reflect upon all that he saw about him. Poverty seemed written on every brick as those miserable structures, in the shattered windows, contained with stained and dirty rags, remnants of wearing apparel, and divers articles that the inventive mind of the destitute occupants suggested as means of keeping out the cold and the glister at the same time.

Each and every little darkened room had its own segreto, its long, maddened, weary story founded on the same distressing hap's, neglect, the forunner, the root of those trials, poverty, sickness and vice.

"What misery!" he mused, and had he seen less of the stern realities of our world he would have shuddered. He knew that the horrors his imagination had pictured must exist within those buildings, for one of the vicious suffering from the weight of the iron band of poverty was without and by his side.

At last Little Phoebe had done her distant journey, it terminated at the end of a blind alley, where something like forty to fifty families existed in fourteen small houses. Yet we have emigration societies, and—reforms!

At the door of the last house on the left-hand side Phoebe stopped still.

"Poor little Phoebe, you had better go up alone. You have money for to-morrow; tell your mother I will come at dusk, it is too late to-night for me to intrude."

"Oh, sir, thank you; dear mother says Heaven will bless those who are kind to the weak; then I'm sure He will bless you."

Thus into a dark passage and up a darker staircase Phoebe went fumbling her way to a room at the top of the house where her mother lay, without fire, without light, without hope, excepting that death would bring release.

The street door was shut, the house was very quiet; listening for one minute at the door of her mother's room and hearing no sound, no indication of life, Phoebe turned the handle of the door and went in the room. Such a room!

There was no fire, no light, one table, two crippeled chairs and a washstand. The table was by the bed-side and contained a small basin, two cracked tea-cups, a tin candlestick with about an inch of candle in it, two tea-spoons, and such like, that formed the dinner and tea service of little Phoebe's mother.

Quiet in all she did, Phoebe without noise went to the bedside, and lighted the end of a candle, and by its ghostly, uncertain light saw her mother's death-like form was turned towards her.

"Mother, dear mother!"

"Phoebe, my pet, wh're have you been?"

The invalid spoke faintly, and the words were pronounced at short intervals. The child leant over and kissed her with the ardency of a pure love.

It was a sad scene, a touching one too. How easily could any observer have seen that the woman who now lie dying upon that wretched bed had been, or sprung from, a gentlewoman in her time.

The yellow, dusky light of the candle end played with a fitful glimmer on the pale, patient face, and showed that age had not laid her low.

She was young yet, far from forty, and but for the haggard, suffering expression of her features would have been a womanly, though striking likeness to Little Phoebe.

There were still the dark fine eyes, the small and well shaped mouth, the luxuriant hair—gone prematurely gray—and the delicate complexion of a well bred woman; her hands were small too, and transparently white as she placed one round her daughter's neck in a mother's fond caress.

"It is not quite withered yet, dear," she said, trying to smile and glancing toward the table where

stood in a bottle filled with water a large white rose.

It was nearly a full blown one. Some of the leaves had already faded, curled up, and died, but not many, and the beautiful fragrant flower stood flush and full of life where all was sickness, poverty, all but death.

"You will not go out again, Phoebe?"

"No, mother. Look what I have got!"

She did not know exactly herself until she opened the palms of her hands and there saw a sovereign; she had thought it was shilling.

"Who gave you that, child?"

"A gentleman, mother; he saw me home, and asked me my name."

"Your name, child. What was he like?"

"Tall and handsome, with a beautiful beard, and large black eyes and curly hair; he said he would come to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late," murmured the dying woman, languidly, and her eyes stared wildly at the ceiling. "Phoebe," she said, "I am dying fast. I have been failing for many weary years. I shall not see another day. Oh, Heaven! and to think of having to leave you here, to leave you to the temptation that brought me to this, that made you a falsehood around, never—never. Heaven help me!"

"Oh, mother—dear mother," cried Phoebe, running her arms round her parent's neck, "oh, pray, please, don't go on like that; you will not, you shall not die!"

And she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"Shall not die?" the poor suffering woman would have shrieked had not voice and strength failed her. "I will—I won't!" she honestly, unnaturally cried. "Have I not lingered long enough between Heaven and Earth? have I not been a bedridden, helpless creature, living for a purpose—and never having that purpose fulfilled? and now must die to leave you in poverty, and sin, to be in contact with the lowest of the low! Oh, Phoebe, I cannot—I dare not!"

Then the passion of her despair seemed to pass, she spoke quieter, spoke in sobs and with a strange, gentle pathos.

"Phoebe," she said, "come to me, darling. Do you know what death means?"

"No, mother, not quite."

"Can you think?"

"It's to go to Heaven and live in a beautiful world where there are angels and good people, and little girls don't have to beg for their poor mothers."

"Bless you, darling, and would you like your poor mother to go there—go amongst the angels, where all is beautiful and happiness?"

Little Phoebe paused to consider. The pinched, worn expression of her face had somewhat gone, and now, with her young mind taxed with the mighty mystery of the divine world, the expression of her pretty face was almost spiritual in its beauty.

"Yes, mother; if you'll take Phoebe with you."

How fondly the mother clasped her child to her bosom then.

"Far, far better is it," she murmured, "she should go now than he left to the mercies of this wicked world; he left to do as I did, blight my own life and that of him I loved by the one sad, sad, false step. Heaven will forgive me for meditating such a wrong; but here beneath this pillow I have the means of our death; a quiet, painless death. Heaven give me strength, and forgiveness, I will do it!"

Then she spoke aloud:

"Come to bed, darling."

And so with her poor, suffering heart bursting in anguish—her brain determined on the destruction of that little life and her own, did she take the child to her breast to fondle and to love, before taking that which an Almighty Power alone could give.

She never thought how strangely the power that gave that life could watch over its safety. Even now, whilst Little Phoebe knelt by her dying mother's side in prayer, the stranger who had been left out in the street was outside the room door, prompted by a fierce impulse, he alone could account for, to seek the woman where she lie, and so with the door ajar, he looked in on the scene hallowed now, but so soon to become an unhappy tragedy.

It was a strange ending to a stranger life. Let it be told. Let those who should be warned know how one false step brought that dying woman down to what we see her now. Fading away like a shadow beneath the sun's strong light, passing unknown, unheeded, like a miserable woman, from the face of this earth for ever.

CHAPTER I.

TIME, with his never resting wings, had worked wondrous changes in the great drama of life; Ada

Ellis had gone through many of its strangest scenes in the last fourteen years. She had played many parts before the drama closed, many and various. The first stop had been a false one, the dreary wind up was but the natural sequence.

Ada had lost her mother when young, and her father was not the kind of man to bring up daughters as they should be brought up. Somewhat mean and selfish too, he often caused dissensions in his small household by refusing his children many of the ordinary necessities that help to make up the happiness of a young life.

Mr. Edward Ellis was not a rich man, he had never been one, and never went the way to become one, But he could keep, and did keep, a good house in the best part of Wells, Somersetshire, where he lived on a moderate income, the source of which was a silver lead mining company which he had helped to start when a young man, and rendered very essential service to in a legal capacity, having been educated and brought up for the law.

Mr. Ellis had been a sober man all his life until his wife died: then he sank to drown reflection, and on the second and third anniversary of his wife's death he suffered from a serious attack of delirium tremens brought on by excessive indulgence.

When sober he was a gentleman, when drunk he was little less than a brute, and his two daughters suffered thus all the agonies due for the man they had been taught to love and the effects of drink could bring upon them. But Ellen, the elder sister, bore it patiently, bore it in self and sorrowful silence, ever hoping and praying a change would come, and her prayers were answered: a change did come, but not the one the daughters could have wished.

It came in the shape of a mother-in-law, seven years older than Ellen—a bitter, spiteful, selfish, domineering woman, with more beauty than good feeling, with a cheek much softer than her heart, and mind as strong as were her passions, and they were very strong indeed.

"Oh, Ellen," Ada had said in tears, "I shall never be able to get up with that woman!"

"You must, Ada. Try and curb that hasty temper of yours, or your life will be misery to yourself."

"I can't—I won't! Indeed I never will. I'd—I'd run away sooner, than I would." And then she went.

"Ada, Ada," said her sister, severely, "why, what could you do?"

"Work!" answered Ada.

Her independent spirit was fully roused now, and she meant all she said.

Ada was proud in her way, ladylike, and would commonly have been called a beautiful girl, and those who had said so thought they had described her. But there was something more than beauty of face and form. There was a depth in her—a depth not easily fathomed, even by the most acute observer.

She was kind-hearted too—gentle as a baby when led, but to drive her, as the saying goes, was a proceeding that always brought about the same result as trying to make a donkey drink when the animal is not thirsty. Need the result be explained?

There was a something too in Ada's nature that people could not understand and did not try to understand, a something beyond explanation, yet that once discovered would have made it easy for the discoverer to mould her into any shape.

Ada, properly understood, properly cared for and watched with a mother's gentle eye, would have been a brilliant, beautiful and clever girl. Ada, as she was, was fitful in temper, wayward, treacherous, and obstinate at the most dangerous age of a girl's life, and in a most dangerous condition of mind.

When Mr. Ellis brought his second wife into the house Ada was scarcely nineteen, a time of life at which she was not calculated to place herself under the guidance of a woman only three years her senior, and so Mr. Ellis had brought misery into the house and happiness fled out of it.

"Why, complained Ada, pettishly, to her sister, "why should father bring a woman here to turn us out; and he is afraid of her."

"Never mind, Ada, you know that everyone sympathises with us, and that she is generally disliked; father has bought a rod for his own back, and dearly will he smart for it. Bear her tyranny quietly; something will turn up some day, to save us from her clutches."

"Never; oh no. Never. I won't give in, I won't; no, I won't. I'll go and ask Aunt Anne if she will have me."

"What, and become a dependent! No, Ada. But never mind; let me tell you I've got a note from Charlotte Liddon; her father gives a soiree to-night, and she asks us to go; will you?"

"Why not. Anything is a relief from this place, and the doctor is always very kind."

The doctor, Mr. Robert Liddon, had been an old friend of the Ellis family when Mrs. Ellis was alive, but, glad always to acknowledge Mr. Ellis as a gentleman and friend at his house, he could not tolerate Mr. Ellis as a drunkard, and so the friendship broke off, excepting with the young branches of both families, and the Misses Liddon still clung in true friendship to Ada and Ellen, and the doctor, with more than pity in his heart for the motherless girls, was glad to see them always.

So on the day when Charlotte Liddon sent the invitation to Ellen and her sister, the doctor and his wife were preparing for the party in the evening.

There were to be some strangers there, gentlemen from London, as Miss Charlotte had said when Ada and Ellen arrived and she had got them in her private little room, helping them in sundry little mysteries connected with the decorations of a woman's dress.

"I've seen two," she went on, her face red with joyful anticipation of the evening pleasure. "Oh, and one is such a sweet creature."

And then, of course, Ada was all ears, all excitement, blushes, and tremblings.

"I'll introduce you," said Charlotte.

"Oh, do please," answered Ada, wondering how Charlotte could be so unselfish, and making up her own mind not to be nervous when amongst the company.

But our best intentions give way sometimes; so did Ada's courage. Once in the doctor's drawing-room amongst the life and fashion of Wells, and a few dazzling strangers from London, she went quietly to a remote corner of the room, and carried on in fearful whispers a conversation with Miss Liddon the younger.

"Where?" said Ada, "are the two gentlemen from London? Which are they?"

"They are not here yet—oh, yes, look—here they come! Oh, isn't he nice?"

Ada did not reply, her eyes were fixed upon the drawing-room door, which was wide open, and upon its threshold stood two men, both young, but widely different.

The foremost was attractive beyond the ordinary; handsome and graceful, his beauty was such as few men could boast of, his figure near perfection as anything real could be; he was very fair, dazzling fair, with a dreamy, quiet eye that seemed to convey to the beholder that his soul was sleeping. But there was a depth in those large hazel eyes, that cast a doubt over his handsome face, a treacherous depth, that could anyone have searched out the mystery at the bottom would have shunned him as they would a monster in man's form, with a heart to fascinate and a soul to blight and to kill.

The second comer was younger, with an open, ingenuous, manly countenance, and a form that became well a young disciple of Hercules. He was good-looking too, and one glance at his bronzed neck and tanned hands told the rest: Cuthbert Milburgh was an athlete, scholar, barrister, gentleman.

But he only came in for a mere casual glance from Ada. Her mind was held by the beauty of the other, her soul was fascinated, her heart—was in the stranger's keeping. The power of love is always strange; even the love at first sight.

The doctor and his wife made a fuss with the tall, fair stranger: so did everybody else, and the tall, fair stranger deeming himself a god, was worshipped deigned to smile, and his smile was not a pleasant one.

Ada sat still, she feared to come forward, and was content to watch the every movement of the stranger whose name she longed to know, but could not, for he was so monopolised by the whole company, and so Charlotte was forced to break her word to Ada, but made up for the delinquency by introducing Mr. Cuthbert Milburgh, for which Mr. Cuthbert Milburgh expressed his gratitude.

Ada blushed and looked as she felt, very nervous, but Mr. Milburgh knew how to put people at their ease with that grace and assurance that belongs exclusively to the English gentleman.

"Really," he said, quietly, and smiling into her pretty face, "Miss Ellis must pardon me for what I am about to say. But we really ought not to see so bright a flower in so obscure and shady a corner. Pray let me lead you over there amongst those ladies. You need have no fear; a rose so bright must always be the brightest, even among such charming flowers as we now have."

And he looked round upon the ladies present.

Ada reddened. At any other time the full, rich voice and manly, ingenuous face of the young barrister would have charmed her to an irresistible degree.

But the fair stranger was in the room, and once he had caught her eye and thrilled her with a glance.

"No, thank you; I would sooner stay here, please," she said.

"And I too," responded Mr. Milburgh, with another frank smile. "Solitude with one so gentle and so beautiful is doubly sweet."

Unused as Ada was to society, she could nevertheless see that Mr. Milburgh did not speak with the mere intent of uttering absurd compliments. He was an impulsive, rash fellow, with a soul of admiration, very susceptible, and what he said he meant. His desire was to please, and to please was to show he deserved her worthy his attention.

She liked him better as he talked more; she would have liked him still better had there not been the fair stranger there.

The conversation was stopped by preparations for dancing.

"Come, my dear," said Doctor Liddon; "you must all join, you know."

Then, before young Milburgh had time to ask Ada, the Doctor came up and presented the fair stranger to her, saying:

"Miss Ada, an old friend of mine wishes the favour of your hand in this quadrille."

Milburgh's face flushed, but he bowed and left.

Ada did not speak. She trembled visibly, and the handsome stranger led her into the centre of the room, to the envy of all the other young ladies.

The dance commenced.

Ada was light, and, like most girls, took to dancing intuitively.

The quadrille pleased, but the waltz maddened her, and while they whirled through the room her companion spoke to her, saying well-told speeches in a vein so gentle, so musical, and with such a semblance of truth, that poor Ada was quite lost.

He gave her his name as Victor Hamilton. He was a lieutenant in the Guards, he said, and Ada adored him all the more for it.

Poor, simple girl! It was hard to doubt him. She would have been wise if she had!

The party began to break up, and by the spiteful looks and cool adieux from her friends, Ada saw that the attentions paid her by the brilliant Mr. Hamilton had been noticed by all.

"Good night, Miss Ellis," said young Milburgh, coming up to Ada. "I hope we shall meet again."

Poor Cuthbert! It would have been far, far better for him to have hoped for death; but Destiny will have her way, and we must go it.

Victor Hamilton, as he had styled himself, saw Ada home.

He spoke of her parents and herself; he sympathised with her when she spoke of her dear mother, pitied her when she mentioned the mother-in-law.

It was very hard, he said, stroking his splendid moustache, to be under the tyranny of a vindictive woman.

Then he dazzled her by talking of a quiet home near London. How delightful, what bliss it would be to such a blushing man of the world as he to have so dear and gentle a wife to meet him in the peaceful quietude of a happy home, all their own.

The picture brought tears to Ada's eyes, and she drooped her head.

The difference in their position, she said, sorrowfully, was too great. She deplored her fate—one cared for her—she wished she was dead, and so on. She meant it then.

Then he soothed her, talked of throwing position to the winds. What was position balanced in the scales against love?

Ada believed he spoke from his heart, called to her mind all the stories she had heard of poor girls becoming great ladies, thought such was her fate, and followed the inclinations of her vanity.

He pressed her hand when they parted; he would have kissed her, but prudence restrained the impulse. He spoke of quiet meetings in a pretty little piece of country close by, and she listened to him; he persuaded, and she consented. She never stayed to think and to see how sadly she was growing weak.

She left him with her head in a whirl, in senses confused, dazzled; her heart on fire with a love that should have been less sudden and more holy. She did not sleep that night, she tried hard, but failed.

She almost counted the minutes as they passed, the hours she carefully watched until the time came round for her to meet the man who only dazzled that he might destroy.

They met the next night in a shady nook, and he spoke of love in gentle terms and with a pathos that ought never to have been, aught else but real.

They met again and again, and each time her love grew fonder, his passion stronger. Victor Hamilton liked her; liked as he disliked but few; her face and form charmed him; her pure simplicity made her doubly enchanting.

She was very dear to him now, he had said, and tried to think so.

"I know not, darling Ada, how to leave you even for a few days, but I must go, though the distance is not far. I will write, dear one," he said, "and we will meet again before I go to London. Do you love me, Ada?"

"Yes," she murmured. "I cannot tell an untruth. Yes, very much, and I shall die if you go away from me for ever."

"I will not, darling," he said, and kissed her quivering lips.

Then he led her back home. The hour was later than usual, and Mrs. Ellis met Ada in anger.

"Where have you been, you bad girl," she cried.

"Out," said Ada, doggedly, with friends.

"You are going to ruin; nothing pleases you, you are never contented at home. Your dress would be preposterous if your father gave you sufficient money to carry out your wishes, and your vanity is sickening."

So a quarrel commenced, and it was a bitter one. Mrs. Ellis letting her temper get beyond her, struck Ada. It was a fatal blow.

She went away like a girl suddenly changed into stone; went without a tear to her own room, and brooded over the wrong till daylight came.

Sullen and morose she got up and sat alone the next day until evening, then she went to a friend's house.

A letter was waiting for her. It was from Mr. Hamilton.

"My own darling little Ada," it ran, "you will be surprised to hear I must go to London in two days, and I cannot leave without you. Tell me, darling, can I see you again? Will you come so far as to see me? If so, answer at once. Yours very, very loving, and ever fond.

"Victor."

Still impressed with the scene of the night before, Ada took up a pen, and while she wept, she wrote in touching simplicity:

"DEAR VICTOR—

"Oh, if you love me, please take me away from my miserable, miserable home for ever,

"Yours in love and sorrow,

"ADA."

The next day a messenger brought a note from Victor.

It was full of ardent love and golden promises.

"COME, darling, as you are—a part of me—meet me as agreed, and too gladly will I take you to my own heart for ever. You shall be sacred, my love, until we get in London, when, Heaven willing, you shall be my bride for ever. Yes, darling, solemnly do I swear to make you my wife then—would that I had time to do it here?"

Then a postscript told her to come in secret, and burn the letter.

Fearing to doubt, glad of the chance of escape, flattered by the conquest, and dreaming of her future grandeur, Ada never paused.

"Anything but this," she said, as she stood in her room for the last time.

The dusk of twilight swept the earth, as she left her father's house, and its subduing quietude calmed her senses and softened her heart.

Once she wavered, but only once. Her determined tamper came to her aid, and she went on; went on rapidly to meet the man she should have shunned.

On to meet her fate—a fate she could never have foretold.

The gray mist of coming night fell lower, and the giant clouds hung darkling in the air. But she went on.

Her home faded out of sight; the people who passed her on the road faded out of sight; the holy mission that had seen her so often in prayer when her mother lived out of sight, and still she went on.

Want on until the dark walls of the entangled loomed in the dusky air before her. She knew she was near her lover then.

A warning voice bade her stop, and she paused; the same warning voice bade her turn, and she grew afraid; the same warning voice told her she had sinned, and she trembled. Her heart sank—dark mighty shadows seemed to fit about her. She did not turn, but it was too late.

"Ada, my own! my darling!"

Like a talisman was that voice. The shadows fled, the darkness to her was light—the warning voice spoke no more; her fear was gone, and—still she went on!

(To be continued.)

This total amount of income-tax charged during the years 1843-75, as appears from a parliamentary return just issued, was £163,708,750.

HOW MEN BECOME IMMORTAL.

MAN, by many of his kind, is believed to be the noblest element in that august and wondrous compound—the Creator's works. The reasons that give birth to and sustain this belief in the airy realm of human conception are numerous, and some of them not easily explained or understood. I shall endeavour, nevertheless, to render easy of comprehension a few of the causes that conspire to give man the proud distinction which he claims for himself above that of all other created beings as things. To do so effectually it becomes necessary to treat of his mind, and of the many various results produced by the mighty influence it exerts over the actions of his body. The mind of man, unlike his body, is not earthly; the power of death cannot discontinue its sublime existence; the grave cannot fetter its fleet, untiring pinions, nor the destroying hand of decay efface its celestial beauty; for its origin and constitution are, alike, divine. It is composed of four grand elementary parts, viz.: soul, sensibility, intellect, and will, each of which may be resolved into an indefinite number of minor constituent elements. But to separate the human mind into these elements would involve a long and difficult metaphysical analysis, which, where I to engage in, would render my disquisition too long, and less intelligible perhaps, than it would otherwise be; hence I shall not incorporate the matter of my subject and its sustaining arguments with the logic of metaphysics, save to an unavoidable extent.

Man, considered physically, is not more wonderful than some specimens of the brute creation; his mechanism and appetites and theirs being virtually the same. When in a savage state he loves inaction, and remains inactive until prompted by the cravings of hunger, or of some degrading passion, to make an exertion. His sole enjoyment in such a state consists in eating, drinking, sleeping, and cultivating brutal and licentious habits; and his appearance, then, is rather repulsive than prepossessing. Therefore his attributes of structure and animal propensities do not entitle him to any marked degree of superiority over the beasts that roam the forest wild.

But man is believed to be vastly superior to the brute creation, and to all other creations and things formed by the great Architect of the universe. Then, if his desires to eat, to drink, to sleep, to enjoy his ease, to fight, to murder, to take revenge, to reproduce his kind, and his ability to gratify these desires, be not of a character to impart the distinction attributed to him, it necessarily follows that he owes this distinction to the possession of a duly cultivated mind, and a judicious application of its various faculties to the discovery of those truths that contribute to his happiness, edification and intellectual aggrandizement.

THE BEST MEN.

ROMANTIC women are very apt to take it into their heads that a low-spirited, attenuated individual, with hollow cheeks, and no chest worth mentioning, is a little nearer the angels than a finely-built, bright-eyed man, with broad shoulders, and plenty of animal spirits, and a happy temper. They know the latter is handsomer, but think the former must be ever so good and ever so intellectual. The nearer an "anatomy" he is, the more certain they are that he is "very refined;" and they have not the slightest doubt that, if the truth were known of the other, that he would be quite a subject for revival efforts.

Heaven forbid that I should say that a man, who was the victim of ill-health, could not be both good and wise. Many are so; but the very best men I have ever known were strong, rugged, vigorous ones—and health of body develops health and mind in a wonderful degree.

The most truly refined men I have ever met have looked like men. They have had colour in their cheeks, and flesh on their bones. Cowardice was not in them, and about them was a sort of atmosphere of safety and protection.

They are much the best sort of men to fall in love with, I am sure. It is the delicate dandy, with the latest style of moustache, beautiful, straight nose, and arms like a girl's, who, with his half-dozen love affairs on his hands at once, is never really true to any one. A manly man gives his heart honestly when it is given at all, and to the heart that is given him he is very tender in his strength.

And I feel sure that manly men look manly, and that there is no better quality than manliness.

Women know so little about men, just as men know so little about women, that, really, it is scarcely safe for us to write about each other. But I actually believe—or I would not say it here—that

a good, pure life, such as we would like our brothers, our husbands, or our sons to lead, leaves men strong, and shapely, and handsome, and light-hearted; and that it is often nothing but dissipation that gives a man that look which innocent girls are apt to call "very refined," and to couple in their hearts with every virtue

M. K. D.

A SPRAY OF LILACS.

It was only a spray of lilacs, twined
In a maiden's sunny curl,
But it took me back to the joyous days
When I, too, was a happy girl!
I saw the homestead, old and brown,
With its welcoming, open door.
And the tall, tall lilacs, either side,
That such regal blossoms bore.

And I saw my mother, young and fair,
Just as she seemed to me,
When I, a timid, gentle child,
Was prattling at her knee.
Her hair was all in shining braids,
Her smile was, oh, so sweet.
And I sat, as in the olden time,
A learner at Love's feet.

I seemed to catch the odorous breath,
Of the blossoming orchard-trees;
To list to the robin's jubilant notes,
And the hum of the gold-zoned bees.
I loitered by the silvery brook,
I filled my cup at the spring,
And sought the well-remembered path,
That led to the dear old swing!

I heard my brother's merry shout,
As they called the cattle home;
Ah! never they thought that we, afar
From our quiet farm, should roam.
That rankling weeds might choke the
spring;

The orchard trees decay;
And mosses, ferns and tangled vines,
Cling where we loved to stray!

The aged pair were laid to rest,
Beneath two billows of green;
And in the churchyard sad and lone,
I walk their graves between.
But with the subtle, faint perfume,
Of the maiden's lilac spray,
Youth comes anew, and its halcyon joys,
All, all are mine to-day.

Oh, what a loving heart is wealth,
And the breath the world calls fame,
If only back in our childhood home
We can call each cherished name!
For the pictures memory shrines,
All others fade before
The sunny homestead of my youth,
With the lilacs by the door.

L. S. U.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

THE revival of "Wild Oats" at the Haymarket is a matter on which we may congratulate lovers of the drama. Why a theatre with such actors at call as Sothern, its veteran manager, J. B. Buckstone, Messrs. Clarke, Howe, Henrietta Hodson, and Maria Harris, should turn aside from its time-sanctioned career of English comedy to tread the questionable and dirty byways of French drama is "a question to be asked." We are therefore glad to see the French "Stranger" turned out of doors and the old class of pieces with which the fame of the Haymarket is linked restored. The modern stage has not, nor is it likely to have, a better representative of Lady Amaranth than Miss Hodson, and we hope the season is not too late to give the comedy a long and triumphant "run." We must note a few of the minor characters. "Sir George Thunder" finds in Mr. Howe a forcible representative. Then "John Dory," his grumbling, faithful, and too-attentive valet, is played with unusual breadth by Mr. Everill. The geniality and exuberant high spirits of Mr. Charles Harcourt's "Rover" contrasted sparklingly with Mr. Clarke's silky "Ephraim Smooth," while Mr. Kyrie's "Harry Thunder" is gentlemanly and Mr. Braide's "Farmer Gammon" most truculent. The sprightly "Jane" shone in the acting of Miss Maria Harris, while Mrs. E. Osborne's

"Amelia" was exuberantly natural and vulgar. Mr. W. Gordon made the most of "Banks," and Mr. Weatherby did his best with "Lamp." The comedy is capitaliy mounted, and its condensation to three acts gives it closeness. Those who admire a bit of low comedy of the legitimate stamp, should look in and see Mr. Conway as "Jeremiah Bumps," in Poole's farce of "Turning the Tables," at this theatre.

THE GLOBE.

HERE the revival is "Frou-Frou," on which, while admitting the completeness and evenness of the representation, we can hardly congratulate Mlle. Beatrice. The plot of "Frou-Frou" is a problem or paradox. A hysterical heroine is certainly hardly responsible for her actions when under the influence of her malady, but we doubt whether hysteria is a proper prime mover in the construction of a dramatic plot. "Frou-Frou" runs away from a husband she loves with a man she don't love. Spoiled by adulation, she sins through bad temper, and then seeks to evoke our sympathies. Madame Beatrice is intelligent and painstaking, but we fail to recognize the very French "Frou-Frou" which the dramatist intended. Henri de Sartory was steadily played by Mr. Carter-Edwards, and sister "Louise" nicely given with girlish gaiety by Miss Jessie Edwards. Mr. Wenman's impersonation of "Brigard," the parent of "Frou-Frou," was a farcical representation of a very loose old gentleman. Mr. Harvey, and the other members of Mlle. Beatrice's company, exerted themselves satisfactorily in securing the acceptance of the piece by the audience.

AT the ST. JAMES'S "Les Danchieff" has quitted its ground, as the company is under provincial engagements in France.

THE DUKE'S THEATRE, Holborn, is given up to Promenade Concerts, by a first-rate band of sixty performers, conducted by Carl Myer.

AT the HAYMARKET the management announces that Dion Boucicault's admirable comedy, "London Assurance," is in active preparation. Henrietta Hudson will be "Lady Gay Spanker."

AT the ADELPHI, "The Colleen Bawn" and "Struck Oil" furnish a full bill of fare. Miss Maggie Moore, Mr. J. C. Williamson; Messrs. S. Emery, W. Terriss, J. G. Shore, W. Everard, E. Moreland, and S. Calhain, with Mrs. Alfred Mellon, Miss Hudspeth, and Cicely Nott, support the old glories of the Adelphi.

AT the STRAND "The Dress Coat," and "Living at Ease," with "Nemosia," all of which we have recently noticed in the "LONDON READER," continue their popular career.

Miss LYDIA THOMPSON and her troupe have been playing "Blue Beard" in Edinburgh with great success.

Mr. J. L. TOOLE has been drawing crowded houses at Bristol.

IT is announced that Miss Carlotta Addison, being on the eve of contracting matrimony, will take a farewell of the stage in a very short time.

THE OLYMPIC, under the management of Mr. Neville, will open with "The Duke's Motto," and "No Thoroughfare."

THE clever Miss E. Farren and Mr. G. M. Anson have been playing at Manchester in "Pampered Menials," and "Young Rip Van Winkle," to good audiences. The opera troupe, with Miss Emily Soldene at its head, known as "Morton's," is also at Manchester.

THE WESTMINSTER AQUARIUM THEATRE has closed its doors with Jenny Lee's benefit, and "Jo" is now on his travels.

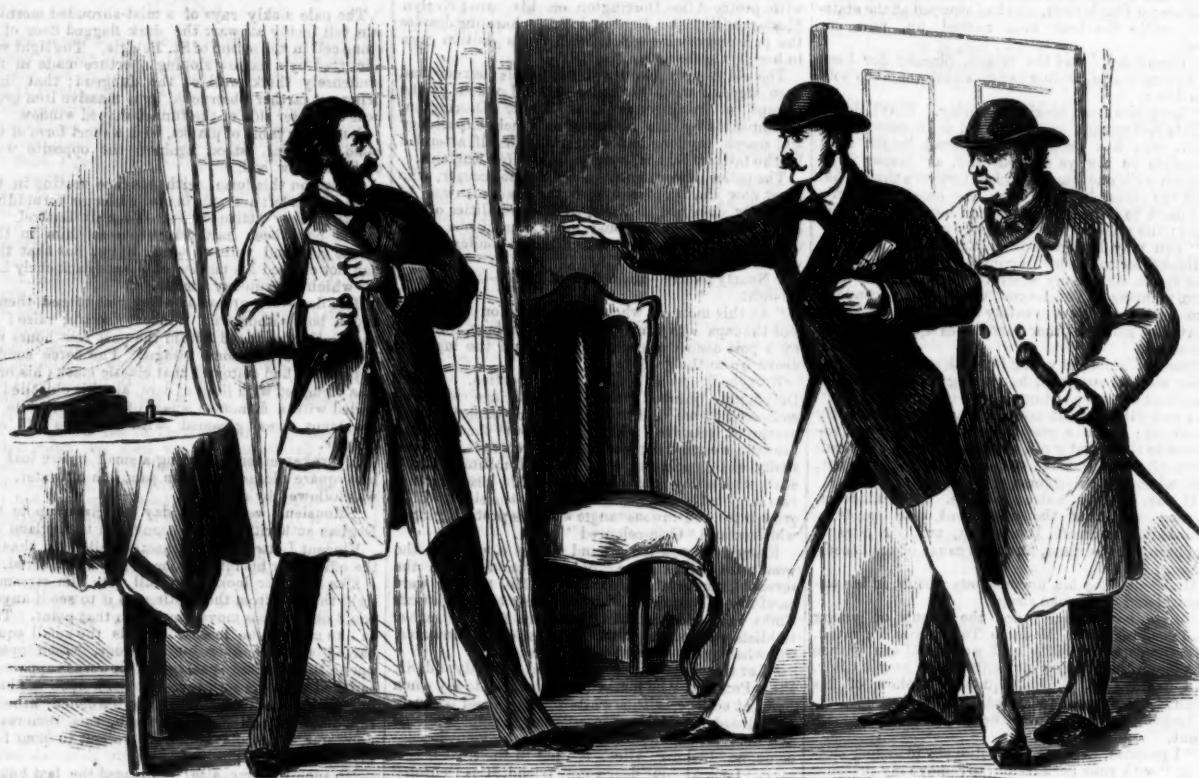
THE COURT THEATRE will close next week, and the company soon after open in Manchester.

THERE is a rumour that "Richard the Third" is preparing at Drury Lane on a scale of superlative magnificence.

WE regret to say that Mrs. Bancroft is recovering slowly, and will not appear on the stage during the present season.

THE "People's Caterer," Mr. W. Holland, has been keeping the ball rolling at North Woolwich with a succession of al fresco entertainments. "A Grand Fancy Drop Garden Party" may be noted as a novel attraction. The gardens are now certainly at their best.

AT the ALEXANDRA PALACE the past week has produced the Summer Trotting Race Meeting; Madame Van Meersch and her Wonderful Birds; the International Pigeon Show and Races; the admired Baden-Baden Concerts in the grove, alternated with the Promenade Concerts in the great hall, with balloons, illuminations, and fireworks ad lib.



[LUTTREL AT DAY.]

VINCENT LUTTREL; OR, FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

By the Author of "Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE immediate cause of the unwanted excitement of Therese Tourlourou and her stirring summons for aid, which we have recorded at the close of the last chapter, may be briefly narrated.

We left Vincent Luttrell seated by the bedside of Fitzgerald, making him cheerful by all sorts of devious promises and the prospect of deliverance from exile and a restoration to his social position in his native land; all which, as we readily believe what we wish to be true, completely deluded the poor broken-down adventurer into an idiot's paradise of confidence and gratitude.

Vincent Luttrell had at one time thought that he might induce Fitzgerald to change his lodging and place himself under his care, and that then he might effect his deadly purpose at some low drinking-shop, and make his own escape before the fatal effects of the poison should be discovered.

The physical state of Fitzgerald, however, forbade this. He was not capable, as yet, of walking exercise, and, Luttrell thought, a better place could not be found for the execution of his murderous design than that in which he then found him, so he took his measures accordingly.

He learned from a short conversation the exact position of affairs.

"Fitz, my opinion is that all you want to put you firmly on your feet is a little extra nourishment; some generous wine and some light digestible diet. I will send you in something nice from a first-class restaurant, with a bottle of sound côte-roti, and a demi-litre of Chateau Yquem to wash down your fish."

"Very kind of you, very kind indeed," replied Fitzgerald, faintly; "but I have, they tell me, pleuritis from the injury to my rib, and I dare not take stimulating food or drink without—"

"Who tells you so, Fitz? that is only to avoid expense and keep you contented under their own enfeebling and lowering treatment. I'll answer them

in the own professional jargon. They're good young fellows, no doubt, and would shelter you, and guard you, and physic you, gratis, but it isn't physic you want, it is nourishment. The butcher and the wine-merchant shall supply my prescriptions, Fitz, and you'll thank me when you have found the benefit of my regimen and care. I propose to remove you into the country with all convenient speed; fresh air, sound food, and cheerful surroundings will do more for you than drugs and breathing this fetid atmosphere."

"I am truly thankful for your goodness; but it would be a poor return for me to leave those who have stood by me and saved my life in the moment of peril and the pangs of poverty, without even a good-bye, or an announcement of the good fortune that has befallen me. They will share my satisfaction. If Etienne Cambrian and his fellow-students consider I am fit to be removed, I can have no objection. Meantime—ah, there's the old bell of the Temple—one, two, three, four," and he counted up to the tenth stroke of the hammer. "It's not unlikely that one or the other of them, or several, may look in upon their poor old patient before going to lecture. If so, I will tell them of your generous offer; if not, I shall see them in the afternoon or evening. Anyhow, I must decline taking anything but what Mother Gambard is ordered to prepare for me by my kind and young medical attendants."

The patient sank back on his chaff-stuffed bolster and closed his eyes, exhausted by the unusual exertion of so long a speech.

Vincent Luttrell knitted his brows and turned away his head to hide the satanic scowl that distorted his fine features into the semblance of a fiend.

"Hang the drivelling old idiot," he muttered. "I must be prompt or he'll escape me yet. Should one or more of these Bohemians come in my game may be totally spoilt."

He glanced momentarily at Fitzgerald.

His rubicund, pimply face was of an ashy blue, his eyes were closed, and he seemed scarcely conscious.

"If the old scoundrel would only die," thought Luttrell, "it might save me the trouble of hastening that desirable event. But he won't, that's certain, and while he lives my future hangs by a thread. If he won't take his quietus in a bumper of the good Burgundy he used to sing about that's his fault. In that case I must administer my prescription per force, and as that can only be safely done without the knowledge of the patient, I will

just give him a sniff of my anaesthetic, and then for the long-sleep potion."

Turning his back to the bed, and having also a ragged curtain suspended between him and his almost unconscious victim, Luttrell opened his little pattern-case and took out the phial of chloroform.

Now that case was well known to Madame Therese Tourlourou; from it that lady had received the pretty stamped leather housewife at their first interview, and now her eyes, for, with true feminine curiosity, she had been eavesdropping for some minutes and watching, herself unseen, the movements of Luttrell and his victim, were dilated with horror as she saw the fatal pantomime that was going on in the sick man's chamber.

Vincent Luttrell dropped the drug slowly on a linen cloth, then clapped it to Fitzgerald's nostrils.

Madame Tourlourou stayed to see no more, she made three light steps down the ladder.

Luttrell heard a creaking noise, so he went to the door, opened it gently and looked out. No one was in sight. He reclosed the door and once again had recourse to his travelling-case.

This time he was far more careful and deliberate.

He held up the almost opaque bottle against the light, then produced the little glass cylinder and stood it up in a small boxwood cup.

He was about to remove the ground-glass stopper of the phial, when a rushing noise, as of feet and voices, was followed by the bursting in of the door, and, with a cry of "Murderer! assassin!" from Jasper Dorrington, the young Englishman and Inspector Foxcraft threw themselves upon him, Mr. Straps bringing up the rear.

Luttrell uttered not a sound. He cast the bottle from him and swiftly passed his right hand into the breast of his coat.

It came out grasping a bright steel poignard of a bowie-knife pattern.

The quick eye of the police officer caught the movement, and ere the prisoner could deliver a stab at his captor, Jasper Dorrington, Foxcraft struck Luttrell so sharp a blow on the back of the hand with a short truncheon of lignum vitae, that, with an involuntary cry of pain, the deadly weapon flew across the floor and lodged its sharply-carved two-edged point deep in the boards.

Aided by Tourlourou, who had caught the prisoner round the legs, Vincent Luttrell lay gasping and helpless on the floor.

"Hold back this hand flat upon the table," said

the officer to Tourlourou, in a calm deliberate voice. Madame Tourlourou, who had stopped at the stair-foot while the four men rushed up, now entered.

" Permit me," said the virago, placing her knee on Luttrell's arm, adding her no small weight to hold him down.

" Keep him from kicking, Tourley. That'll do."

This last remark was addressed to Inspector Foxcraft, who had produced the small bright steel bracelets he always carried, and, as Jasper Dorrington with one hand clutched Luttrell's throat, he, with the other, brought over the prostrate man's left hand to join company in iron bondage with his right; the prisoner was helplessly unconstrained.

" You may loosen your hold now, sir," said the police-officer to Jasper Dorrington; " your strength and spirit, sir, are my admiration. I and this man here, pointing to Tourlourou, will be able to manage him until we lodge him safely in gaol."

At this moment other personages appeared upon the scene.

Etiene Cambion, young Baspail, and half a dozen other medical students, happening to pass Mother Gambard's, a proposition to look in on " old Piers" had met with general approval, and were instantly acted on; hence a goodly crowd was gathered together in the rickety old workshop forming the bedroom of the still utterly unconscious old gambler, over whom the chloroform yet held its sway.

It was, in truth, a strange scene. On a rude form, in one corner of the apartment, sat, carefully guarded by Foxcraft, Tourlourou, and Mr. Straps, the hero of the drama, and first cause of the assembly.

On the bed lay his unconscious victim, in his unnatural and death-like sleep.

In another corner were the group of young medics, to whom Madame Tourlourou narrated, with immense vividness and wonderful exuberance of action, the stirring incidents of the search after, and capture of, the delinquent " nephew of his uncle," as she persisted in calling him.

Inspector Foxcraft was the first to make a movement.

" I propose," said that functionary to Jasper Dorrington, " with your permission, to remove my prisoner to the police-gaol, and claim him under the extradition treaty, as a felon, to be taken to England for trial. As to the victim who has so narrowly escaped, I would recommend, if these gentlemen do not object, his removal to your hotel," said the officer, turning to Jasper Dorrington.

The students did not object, and Fitzgerald, still insensible, was conveyed in a covered litter to the Hotel du Louvre.

As to Vincent Luttrell, he was conveyed, sullen, silent, and incapable of resistance, by reason of his gynnes, to the prison of St. Pelagie.

That night Jasper Dorrington wrote several long and interesting letters.

Two of them especially were addressed to his father and to Lionel Pomfret, detailing the whole of the facts with which the reader is already fully acquainted.

He had only completed his labours by daybreak, and having placed the letters in a special carrier-bag, he entrusted them to the care of Mr. Straps, who left Paris for London by the grande vitesse, at six A.M.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

There was immense jubilation at Dorrington Hall, and in a more restrained and less demonstrative manner at the Rectory of Cloverhook and the villa at Rosemead.

Sir Herbert Dorrington and Lionel Pomfret lost no time in consulting Mr. Maynard, who confessed that he had been too slow to admit what he still called the incredible story of the escape of Fitzgerald from a double death.

However, as the existence of the supposed victim was now an indisputable fact, the old lawyer declared that he must make up his " inches on that score, and would at once set off for Paris, there, with his own hands, to write and take down the depositions of Fitzgerald from his own lips."

" For," said he, " from what I learn, Sir Herbert, this man's life is even now precarious, and we must have the accused cleared of this foul imputed crime beyond a doubt or the shadow of suspicion; and should he, for his life is frail, die before such evidence is duly attested, we may yet leave a doubt on that which must be cleared up, for the sake of Mr. Denton's daughter and your own family."

In pursuance of this resolution, old Mr. Maynard departed for London, en route to France, to bring over, he said, the important witness in person, or, at any rate, his attested and formal depositions.

There was a cheerful party three days afterwards in the breakfast room at Dorrington Hall.

Old Sir Herbert, Lady Dorrington, and Sir Piers

Pomfret, the young Lionel, recovered from his wound, with pretty Alice Dorrington on his arm; Evelyn Stewart with Isabel Denton, looking charming despite the pale cast of care which her father's position gave to her gentle features.

The old lawyer too was there, for his journey had been stopped when he had reached London, by the receipt of intelligence that Jasper Dorrington, accompanied by the object of so much expectancy and search, the long-lost Fitzgerald himself, attended by the faithful Straps, were on route for England.

The police officer in charge of the late accuse, who now change places with the accused, was of necessity detained in Paris, as the formalities of the extradition of the prisoner must occasion a delay. Sir Piers Pomfret consulted his ponderous old chronometer.

Nearly twelve—train due at 11.15—ought to be in sight.

At this moment wheels were heard on the stairs, and the capacious family travelling carriage, followed by a post chaise containing Straps and the luggage, drove up to the door.

Everybody went out to the portico. Jasper Dorrington jumped from the carriage and was embraced by us won't say how many expectant and overjoyed relatives and friends; but the general interest, we must confess, seemed centred in a very shaky old gentleman in a tattered military frock coat, with a large red nose and a bald head, having two large tufts of sandy grey hair at the sides, which grow into a continuous tangle with his profuse ginger whiskers and " Cain-coloured" beard.

Everybody crowded around to get a peep at the wonderful "dead alive" old gentleman, whom the servants, under the direction of Mr. Straps, were carefully lifting out, and whose great bulk and weak limbs made his alighting an arduous affair, a rather ticklish operation. This being effected, however, the whole party went into the house.

" Let this day, my friends," said the jolly old Sir Piers Pomfret, " be marked, as they used to say when I was at college, with a white stone. Land is surely and already in sight, after all our disappointments and delays. Young folks, I can see by your faces—some, no blushing, Alice, it's not in the least necessary. Look at your dear young friend, Miss Denton"—but it was now Isabel's turn to flush. " Dear me!" continued the laughing old gentleman; " I'm always making mistakes. Well, then, this is my proposition: We shall doubtless be able to welcome here by this day fortnight our sore-tried friend, Hugh Denton. Sir Herbert, have I your consent, and yours, my Lady Dorrington, that the first day of next month shall see my son united to your daughter Alice? Your consent. Good! Evelyn Stewart, Isabel Denton, do you either of you know any reason, any just cause or impediment, why the same day should not see you also joined in the holy bonds of matrimony? Silence gives consent, so that matter is settled."

At this moment Mr. Straps, who had been standing in close attendance upon Fitzgerald, slipped from the room, and returned in a few seconds, leading forward by the hand Martha Miller, red as a peony, and outblushing even the scarlet ribbons in her new cap which she had donned to welcome home her travelled sweetheart.

Mr. Straps made a respectful bow to the company in general, and another to Sir Piers in particular.

" If I might take the liberty, Sir Piers, y'raps you'll be so good, as your hand's in, to ask this young woman if the first of the month would suit her; I've got my own consent to it already. You see, sir, she made a half refusal in this wise: Say she, 'Straps, I'll never marry you till my young master, the parson, marries Miss Isabel, and it's for you to see that the poor young lady's father's righted so far as lies in your power, and when that's done,' says she, ' talk to me again about it.' I think, ladies and gentlemen, I've done my best towards my part of the bargain."

" You have, my fine fellow," struck in Jasper Dorrington, " and I'll give Martha Miller a hundred pounds for her dower."

" And I another hundred," said Sir Piers Pomfret.

Mr. Straps' joy was too full for words; he stammered, crushed his hat between his hands, then, turning to the confused Martha, he caught her round the neck, and gave her such a sounding kiss, cocaine popule, that he retreated with his bride under cover of the general explosion of merriment which the little scene created.

All now, indeed, " went merry as a marriage-bell."

The examination and identification of Fitzgerald made the trial of Hugh Denton, which was removed by certiorari to the Queen's Bench, before the judges at Westminster, a mere formal process, ending in the acquittal and immediate discharge of the prisoner.

But where was the accuser? — the friend-friend whose villainy had so long triumphed? The heavy hand of retributive justice had overtaken him.

The pale sickly rays of a mist-shrouded morning sun fell feebly athwart the dark flagged floor of a stone cell in the prison of St. Pelagie. The light was admitted by a narrow sloping aperture made in the immensely thick wall of the dungeon; that light being yet farther obstructed by a massive iron grille near the outer side of the funnel-shaped window.

A massive table of planks, with a short form of the same material, stood against the opposite wall of the narrow cell.

Saddled on this form, with his face resting in the crook of his left arm, his manacled hands forbidding a less uneasy attitude, was Vincent Luttrell. It would have been hard to recognise him in that coarse grey and yellow prison dress, but that they had not clipped his mass of raven-black curly hair on which the sun-ray shone.

The door-lock grated as a key was turned therein and a bolt withdrawn. Vincent Luttrell raised his head. How changed within the past few hours was his amiable handsome visage! The fierce conflict of passions had distorted that classic mask; his brow was ploughed with lines of care, and his chiselled lips curled with a demoniac sneer of defiance, while his moonlit eyes gleamed with the fire of wild despair.

A turnkey entered bearing a small brown loaf cut into square pieces, and a tin pannikin of water. He was followed by a warden.

" Monsieur would that day be given up to the English authorities, and be conveyed to England."

Vincent Luttrell gave a ghastly smile, and thanked the official for his information. The man retired.

The prisoner looked up full into the stream of light that fell from the grating, as if to see if anyone could observe his movements from that point. Then in like manner he looked towards the small square barred aperture over his cell-door, which opened upon the vaulted passage. He was apparently satisfied with the scrutiny. He sank upon his knees upon the stone floor. Was this hardened, atheistic repudiator of all revealed truth, this remorseless murderer, this cold materialist, about to pour forth his repugnance in prayer?

No such remorse, alas! influenced the last hour of the mis-spent existence of Vincent Luttrell.

He stooped his head, and placing his hands behind his neck grasped in the right some small object secured in the thick locks of black hair, which he wore after a fashion not then uncommon, and still prevalent with German students and some foreign musicians. He again raised his head, cast one fierce scowl of defiance towards the blessed sunlight, placed his hands to his mouth, and fell backward.

Vincent Luttrell was dead! Slain by his own hand by a few drops of that dreadful poison with which he had designed to destroy another's life, and which he had carried concealed in his back hair, in a small fountain-ring, as a last escape should fare adverse. Alas! did he in the conceit of his wretched unbelief deceive himself that he could thus by a last crime escape the punishment of eternal justice? In charity we drop the curtain on the closing scene. " The rest is silence."

L'ENVOY.

The triple marriages made Cloverhook a whirligig of merrymaking: and proved as happy as the couples in their several stations of life so well deserved.

We may, however, note that Hugh Denton passed away in a short space of time, but not before he had comfortably provided for the red-nosed ex-captain in an asylum for decayed gentlemen of his own choice. Mr. Straps is now the butler and Martha Miller the housekeeper at the Hall.

One circumstance remains to be noted, of a much more recent date. It is that as Jasper Dorrington grew into a confirmed bachelor, the eldest son of Lionel Pomfret and Alice is heir to the united baronial estates of Dorrington and Pomfret; and as he is a fine hearty specimen of a Harrow boy, and the youthful captain of the cricket eleven who last week represented the school on the hill, at Lord's ground, in the annual match, we may hope that the honours and hospitality of two historic families will be worthily maintained by their next representative.

THE END.

In the way of internal decoration of new houses, the perfection of fashion is to extract from old castles their carved wainscoting—above all of the eighteenth century—and mural paintings. Many of the recently erected palaces in Paris deserve a visit in consequence, and their owners rarely refuse an application.

ARRIVAL OF TELESCOPE FISH FROM CHINA.

I AM happy to be able to inform our readers that a fresh consignment of this rare and extraordinary-looking fish arrived this week in London, by the P. and O. steamship "Gwalior."

The gentleman who brought them over communicated at once with me as to their disposal. Knowing they could not be in first-class condition after so long a voyage, I gave them a lodgment in an aquarium at my museum.

I learnt that he started with four hundred of these fish from China, and when he arrived in England there were only about seventy left out of this number.

The telescope fish are very beautiful little things, about the size of the top joint of a man's middle finger.

When turned out into their temporary lodgings at the museum, they seemed excessively hungry, and greedily devoured the worms given them. They have had nothing but dough to feed upon on their voyage, and I am not surprised at their being hungry. In some respects they are superior fish to those that have already been imported.

I now give a list of their colours, the beauty of which may be seen to be appreciated: bright gold, dark gold, ink-black, chocolate, earth colour, black-and-gold, minnow colour, pure white, and last, but not least one, a most lovely tortoiseshell. Some of purely white had their eyes red, or if not quite red showing red spots round the iris. I am glad to be able to report that all these fish, except a few which have been purchased by Mr. Forbes, of Chertsey, have become the property of the Brighton Aquarium, Mr. Reeves Smith himself having come up on purpose to make the necessary arrangements.

Mr. Henry Lee has described these fish. He tells us, "that the Chinese name is Long-Tsing-Yu, or the dragon's-eye fish."

It is a remarkable monstrosity of the common gold carp, and has been cultivated by continuous selection by the Chinese."

The Japanese produce by careful breeding, so to speak, a "telescope dog." This dog has very prominent eyes and small nose, similar characteristics to that of the telescope fish.

They are called telescope fish from the wonderful way in which their eyes project from their head, resembling something of a telescope drawn out of its largest socket.

They seem, however, to be able to have the organs of vision quite perfect, although the eyes project so far. Their tails are divided, some into three, some into four, and are horizontal instead of perpendicular.

These kind of fishes are frequently depicted on old China vases, screens, etc., and until late years were thought to be imaginary monsters. Facts, however, are stranger than fiction, and it now appears certain that these supposed imaginary telescope fish were portraits of fish that really existed, and probably have existed in China hundreds of years without our knowing anything about it till a few months ago, when the first specimens arrived. I am in great hopes that these fish may in time become quite as common in this country as the ordinary goldfish which were originally introduced from China.

FRANK BUCKLAND.

TACT.—People cannot help being born without tact, any more than they can help having no ear for music; but there are occasions when it is almost impossible to be quite charitable to a tactless person. Yet people who have no tact deserve pity. They are almost always doing or saying something to get themselves into disgrace, or which does them an injury. They make enemies where they desire friends, and get a reputation for ill-nature that they do not deserve.

Eton College will close on the 4th of August for the long vacation.

B E B E.

"WELL," admitted Jem, "it happen it is harder lines for a woman; but I don't know," and he plucked easily at the twigs upon the tree-trunk, and crushed the leaves in his hand.

"You see," he added, slowly still, "Life's life, an—easily when it is over—it's done with—such lives as ours. It's queer a chap doesn't feel that way about—such as her," nodding his head towards the house.

There was a pause of a few seconds, and then, with a sudden movement, the woman flung herself in her former position, and burst into fierce weeping.

"Such as she!" she cried, a child—a child who prays, and sings hymns. And once—once it was so with me. And I might strive, and pray, and grovel in the dust, and I could not bring it back, for it is lost for ever, for ever! Oh, Heaven! If there is a Being to hear me, crush my life out now and let that be the end."

It was a terrible thing to see—this agony of despair, which, even in its mildest depths, rebelled against itself. More life must have been such a bliss to this creature once; and now only to know that death would come swiftly, and be the very end?

Even Jem Norford felt a tremor seize him.

"Don't, Cécile," he said. "Don't say it, my girl—doubt."

"See, clutching her hands, and shaking from head to foot, "That child's song dragged me to the gates of Hades. And the name she called me—the old name. I thought I should never hear it again. The only man I ever loved use to call me Cécile—Cécile; and he was a villain. And to hear it from such lips as hers! Cécile—Cécile, after all these years!"

"The man you loved?" said Norford.

"He was a Frenchman, and I am a Frenchwoman. I had almost forgotten it. France seemed so far away—as far away as the rest."

For a few minutes she seemed to forget herself, and Norford stood by in helpless silence. Rough and uncultured he might be, but not awkward enough to trouble her with further questioning. He had a fancy that she "needed to be let alone," and so he waited. At last she rose.

"I won't go back to the house," she said. "Let them think what they choose. I want purer air, for awhile, to-night. I could not breathe in there. Order the carriage, and bring me a wrap, and I will get in at the door."

When he had obeyed her commands, and she was seated in the carriage, she bent forward and spoke to him abruptly.

"Give me your hand," she commanded. "Both of them."

He gave them with clumsy readiness; and she held them for a moment, in a grasp stronger than he could have imagined her capable of.

"If we were both better, or both worse," she said, "life would look easier to us; but we are just what we are, and there it stands."

She lets his hands drop, and turned her face away, as if she did not wish him to see it.

"Tell them to drive on. And, good night, she added."

As time went on, Floxham found still more cause for wonder at the quiet which reigned over the new establishment, whose evil influence they had so feared. There were no Bacchanalian feasting within its walls, and few disreputable strangers visited it. It appeared upon this whole, that, notwithstanding the boldness of his announcement, that he intended to enjoy himself in his own way, Jem Norford was leading as regular and dull a life as respectability could wish. He staid much at home, and was actually sober for weeks together. The foundry stood agast at the startling temperateness of his habits, and shook its head in private, feeling that such defection from general rules boded no good.

"Summat up," was the verdict. "He's mean himself. Happen th' chap going to take appleplexy. He's just the build for it, in the world. He's always lived a reg'lar lollie up to this start; takin' his sprees ivy bit or so, and there's nowt so dangerous as changin' a chap's settle's ways."

"Happen he's bin converted," suggested one individual, slyly.

A shout of laughter greeted this happy thought.

Now "tha's gettin' it. He's just the build for that, sun—sun—Jem Norford. That 'ud go harder wi' him than appleplexy. He's not o' th' rest breed to tak' it kindly."

They were neither altogether right, nor altogether wrong. It was not conversion that was working in Jem Norford's breast; but the fact was, he had arrived at a mental halting-place. Reaction had set in, and for the present his past pleasure palled upon him. He had outlived the day for plunging headlong into the vortex of pleasure, and manhood brought with it certain penalties of satiety and occasional distaste. Sometimes he was glad to stand aloof, and let things drop. In such hours as these, the quiet of the great, lonely, luxurious house suited him, and he felt a longing for some innocent companionship. So he took to Bebe and grew fonder of her than even he himself knew. The servants had strange tales to tell of the whimsical familiarity which had established

itself between them. Bebe spent many an hour in the wonderful rooms; she even dined often at the stately table.

"Blessed if she isn't more at home than me," he would say, laughing loudly. "She might have been used to it all her life. She keeps a step in countenance, an she's company too."

She was good company for him. Some hours working in the small room made her comprehension of things quick in a fashion of her own—quicker than her host's. She was not afraid of the pictures. She asked questions about them, and finding Jem's knowledge of art limited, she applied to Julie. She was particularly interested in a copy of the Sistine Madonna. "She was good, so good, you say," was her remark. "I want to be good too."

Still she did not belong to the order of ethereal children, this young devotee. Her views of life were chiefly practical ones; she was a child, and therefore severely pure in a child's simplicity and ignorance of wrong. It was because she was a child that she had touched Jem's heart, and made herself a place within it.

"There's some as takes to dogs, an' some as takes to horses," reflected he philosophically. "An' I've noticed as it's chiefly chaps as has nothing in particular to set their minds on. I've taken to a child. A fellow must have his whim, an' a child's mine."

But he was not allowed to indulge in it long. The child's constitution was a frail one, as her ill-developed frame and her small face would have told the most ordinary observer. She was prone to strange, unchildish ailments; and all juvenile trials went hardly with her. The "bad, bad head," of which she had spoken to Jem at their first interview, was one of her chief troubles. It came upon her often, and upon such occasions she would sit, pale and silent, answering all questions with painful gravity.

"It's the 'bad head again' monsieur," she would say to Norford, "I must be quiet."

One morning, as he passed the lodge, the white cap was not within sight, and Julie came to the door, looking troubled and fatigued.

"It's the 'bad head again' monsieur," she said; but this time it is worse than ever before. I laid not down, last night, her pain was so great. It is a strange malady for so young a child. My husband is gone for the doctor. I begin to feel alarmed."

On his return from the country, Norford stopped in the village and purchased a wonderful doll, attired in gauze and tinsel. It was the best Floxham afforded, and was considered a work of art, though its price being above the capabilities of its admiring pockets, it had simpered from its window many a weary day.

"She'll like this," he said, with some paroxysmic pride. "It was only last week as she was complaining of her old one's nose. This'll quite set her up when she sees it."

There was a light burning in the house when he entered it, and a man was bending over the narrow, white bed, while Julie stood near, fearful and troubled. The parcel felt suddenly heavier than he had found it before. Norford stopped short.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, under his breath.

The man, who bent over the bed, raised himself, and gave Norford a curt bow.

"It's a bad case," he said brusquely, and as if he had few words to spare. "Brain, you know; and brain's always a bad business. Then to Julie, 'If you will step into the next room with me, madam, I will elaborate my instructions.'

They went into the adjoining room, leaving Jem alone with the child. She was lying quite motionless, uttering little moans, and their sound, low as it was, filled the bower with awe.

"There—there's something wrong up with her," he said. "What is it? She was never like that before."

He unwrapped the doll, and stooped down over her pillow.

"Young un!" he said. "I say, Is he?"

Almost immediately he drew back, startled and awed by the utter unresponsiveness of the child's face. She neither heard nor saw him. The half-moans went on; the half-closed lids did not even tremble.

"She doesn't hear me," said Jem, standing apoplectic again. "She doesn't hear me."

He could scarcely realise the truth, even though it was so plain a one. Who of us has not felt the slow, creeping awe of a familiar face, which is not what it was but yesterday; which has drifted out of our reach, and neither sees nor hears.

He still stood there when Julie re-entered.

"She doesn't hear me," he said, with a half-wondered look.

"No," was the answer. "She does not hear you, monsieur."

As she approached the bed, and touched the child's hands, Julie burst into sudden tears.

"I have not thought that she would die," she said. "She was always frail; but I have not thought that she would die. And she has been to me as my own, from the first hour."

"Die!" said Norford. "She isn't—"

He was startled beyond measure. Yesterday morning she had nodded to him, from her usual stand on the steps; and here was her doll, in all her tinsel finery! He glanced from the painted cheeks, and round, wide-awake eyes, to the child-face on the pillow.

"I bought this thing for her, on my way home," he said. "Nay, I can't believe that."

He could not believe it wholly, even when she told him that the medical man had given her no hope whatever.

"I'll send for another," returned Norford, hastily. "I'll send to London for one—a regular nob. She shan't want for nothin' money can bring. I'm set on her, missis. I tell you I never took to anything in my life as I've took to her. She shan't die if Jem Norford's money can buy life for her." And he passed his hands, in a hurried, emotional caress, over the childish head.

"I'd give a good deal to see her open her eyes, and laugh at mine, there," with a jerk at the doll, who sat staring at the foot of the bed.

"Monsieur is very generous," said Julie, shedding more tears. "Monsieur has the kind heart."

He had. All the great house contained was placed at the disposal of the invalid—wines, kitchen-furniture, servants.

So everybody knew, next day, that Norford had sent to London for a great physician, and had given orders to his household to consider themselves at the service of the gate-keeper's wife; all for the sake of the wifey that lay between life and death in the little house.

"As if she wur his own flesh an' blood," it was said. "Ho's a cranky chap to mak' out, Jem Norford; an' he's not haaf bad i' the long run, for a' his marlocks."

The great physician came in state, evidently bewildered at such a turn of affairs. He was received at the great house, and entertained, and escorted by Norford to the lodge.

"It's a little lass I've set my mind on saving," said Norford, unwontedly excited, and almost pale with feeling. "Save her!" laying a heavy hand on the shoulder of the great man. "Save her, and set her up again, and send in your bill, and Jem Norford's good fur it, whether it's three figures, or four."

But, important a personage as he was, the great man could do no more than the little one had done. He looked at the changed face, and asked questions, and looked again; and at last shook his head.

"My dear sir," he said to Norford, "I am deeply grieved, but I may as well tell you the truth. There is nothing for me to do here. There is nothing to be done." And he laid the child's hand down on the coverlet again.

"Nothing?" echoed Norford. "Nothing, man?"

"Nothing. With children like this one life is never long. The end is at work from the first. It is only a question of time."

When Norford came back to the lodge, having seen the great man on his way to more important duties, in a more important field, he found Julie still in tears. The doll sat propped against the bed's foot, staring at Bebe, who lay upon her back, her cap pushed off her curly head, her eyes wide open, and wandering.

"Do not go, monsieur," said Julie, seeing him draw back. "Do not go. I have—there is something I would say to you."

"The pretty mademoiselle!" murmured Bebe from her pillow. "The sister of monsieur! Where is she? The beds upon her neck shine. I must have them, monsieur."

The woman rose, pale and trembling, as if moved by some powerful emotion.

"Do not mind her," she said. "It is not often so. She does not see us."

She was very much shaken by the flat which had gone forth, Jem thought; even more shaken than he had imagined she would be. He did not know that another long-hidden grief was at work within her, until she spoke.

"Monsieur," she said, weeping, "if I had been a mother, even a mother whose child was her shame, even a mother lost and stained, I think, it seems to my heart to-night, that the death-bed of my child would touch me."

"The pretty beads!" said Bebe, softly. "The pretty beads of Mademoiselle Cicolie!"

"There is a woman who has been to your house," continued Julie; "a woman I have seen, but who

has not seen me, because I avoided her. It is the woman you call Cicolie, and, monsieur, she is my sister—and the mother of the child."

"The mother!" cried Norford, starting backward. "The mother of the child there? Good Heavens! Cicolie!"

"She is my sister," said Julie. "She was our father's pride and idol, and she broke his heart, and brought shame and ruin upon an honest name. It does not matter for the story; but I had pity upon her child. I could not easily forgive her, but I had sorrow for the child who shared her disgrace. I let her think it did not live, and she went her way. Our little world was too narrow for her pride and beauty. A life of humiliation and penitence did not suit her. So, she went her ways; and you call her Cicolie, and there is her child."

"And she never knew!" said Jem Norford. "Poor lass! Poor lass!"

"I wish," said the woman; "that she should know. She cannot do harm now, and I wish monsieur, that you should tell her. If she would receive the last sigh of her child, if she is not too hard of heart to care, let her come."

Jem Norford regarded the speaker amazedly. He had seen her before, a bright little woman, of cheerful mien and ready tongue; but now he saw her stern, bitter against sin, hard of judgment, firm in her own virtue, and with small mercy for those more frail.

Perhaps, in the by-gone days of her girlhood, she had felt some natural secret envy and displeasure against the beautiful creature, who had almost seemed of finer clay than the rest of them, and who had reigned supreme in her father's house, so well beloved, and so much admired. And it was but the way of poor humanity, that she should be rather just than merciful, when this idol brought shame upon them all.

"If she is not too far lost to bear a heart within her breast," she said again, "let her come."

Norford went back to the house, wrote a telegram, and sent it at once.

"The child is dying. Its mother is Cecilia Mercier. The woman is Julie Mercier. Come as soon as you get this."

The next night Bebe died.

(To be Continued.)

THINKING ALOUD.

THERE comes a time to many of us, often at the early twilight of a pleasant evening, when the mind goes out in fancy and reality, and muses on the past as it was, on the present as it is, and the future as it may be, and to most of us such scenes are sacred.

It is a beautiful thought that the mind may encompass so much in so brief a period, that it may journey while at home. To the wanderer far from his native place, who has gone out alone in the big, busy world for riches, the twilight of a Sunday evening comes with a sort of sacred sadness, but brings its golden memories of scenes on the eastern hillside that light up the features like a summer sunset. And deeper within the heart's chamber will be written new resolves for the future, reaching far out to the distant sometime when he will return to home and happiness, never again to leave them.

There is something in the air, in the sky, and the very breath of twilight, that lends a musing tenor to the mind of the thoughtful. As the shadows lengthen out further in the distance, or the ear catches the faint notes of the village church bells, the hollow stillness breaks in sadness on a pensive heart. At rest from toil, and weary, as it were, with resting, it takes up the harp of memory, to hum sweet music of the past while it gazes toward the mystic future.

And if it be, perchance, that some fond, familiar tune should steal on us unawares, so much the more will memory flood the air with images of bygone days and pleasures of the past.

EXILED FROM HOME.

MR. INSPECTOR CRAFT was standing in the morning-room, in a waiting attitude, when Lord Chilton entered.

The detective officer was a small, sandy-haired man, with eyes keen as a ferret's, yet of a peculiarly quiet and unobtrusive mien.

The young viscount had never seen him, and he was conscious of a sense of disappointment.

Was this the famed detective who had unearthed a dozen celebrated mysteries, who had disentangled certain enigmas which had puzzled all England, and discovered and hunted down, despite all his precautions and disguises, the principal in the noted Prior murder case?

The inspector smiled faintly. He read the visitor's thoughts.

"I am Lord Chilton," said our hero, quietly. "Are you come to tell me, Mr. Inspector, that the task I have set you is too hard? I am well aware of all the difficulties in the way. So many years having elapsed, it must be well nigh impossible to discover the identity of that ill-fated woman."

"I have had harder tasks, my lord," said the inspector, "though I do not deny that the lapse of years made this difficult. I have completed my work. I have discovered the name of the woman who is buried in Penistone churchyard, and I am provided with proofs of her identity."

Lord Chilton's heart seemed almost to stand still. An indefinable dread came upon him.

Who was she—this mother of Gwen—this poor young creature who had perished so miserably on the Yorkshire wastes so many years ago? He was conscious of a wish that he had made no effort to discover her name.

"At the coroner's inquest, at the time her body was discovered," said Mr. Craft, "a complete description of her person and apparent age were recorded in the coroner's register, also a description of her clothing, such as it was. I copied these descriptions at the outset. One or two personal peculiarities of the deceased woman greatly simplified my task. It was recorded that one joint of the first finger of her left hand was absent; also that two incisor teeth in her upper jaw were missing; also that her collarbone had once been broken, and that, probably through lack of care at that period of its fracture, there remained and was seen upon her person a protuberance as of the end of a broken bone. With these data I set to work."

"Every person has some personal peculiarity. Nearly every person has lost teeth. The marks appear to have been too trifling to assist in identification."

"Nothing is too trifling for the consideration of men in my line of business, my lord. A straw is sufficient to show which way the wind blows. It is not necessary that I should describe to you my mode of operations. I have, of course, many resources and aids known only to myself. You desire to know the result of my work, not the manner in which the work was accomplished," said the detective officer. "I will say, however, that I advertised freely throughout the kingdom. I searched the files of old newspapers, old police records, everything that could possibly assist me. And it was through an old newspaper that I obtained a clue to the mystery."

"How so?"

"In an old Manchester newspaper, bearing date February 3rd, 1857, I found an advertisement—but here in the newspaper. Read the notice for yourself, my lord."

He took out a leather pocket-book from his pocket and withdrew from it a parcel of documents, in the midst of which was an ancient newspaper, yellowed by time and slightly defaced with use. A notice in an advertising column, outlined by pencil-marks, had been folded in plain view.

Lord Chilton took the paper and read as follows:

"£10 REWARD.—For information leading to the discovery of Mary Graham, wife of Adelbert Graham, Manchester, who left her home January 27th. Is supposed to have set out on foot for Doncaster, where she had relatives. Was suffering from aberration of mind. Said Mary Graham was eighteen years of age, tall, slim, with black hair and eyes, flighty in her manner, violent in her temper. Wore an old silk gown, Paisley shawl, and straw hat trimmed with black velvet. Had lost two front teeth in upper jaw, and lisped in her speech. Had lost one joint to first finger of left hand. Any information leading to her recovery will be gratefully received and paid for by her afflicted husband, No. 9, Dovewell Street, Manchester.

The young viscount was startled at the coincidence of this description with that of the woman who had been found upon the Lone Moor.

"After finding that advertisement, I made a search for Adelbert Graham," said the Inspector. "I found him still in Manchester, a baker by trade, married to a buxom woman and father to several children. He had believed his first wife to be dead, and had married again ten years ago, but still he was haunted by the fear that the first wife might still be living, and that she might turn up some day and ruin him forever. He is devoted to his present family, and that fear of the first wife was like a constant nightmare to him. When I told him my errand, he welcomed me as a brother. I left him in a perfect

transport of delight, the happiest man in England!"

"He believed that woman, then, to be his wife?"

"I proved her to be such," replied the detective. "Adelbert Graham was born and brought up in Manchester. In visiting Doncaster on business, he saw and fell in love with a pretty young girl, whom he soon after married. The girl had long been subject to fits. After her marriage, she became moody, suspicious, and violent. Her mind became utterly deranged. In a fit of anger against her husband, she left her home, and he never saw her again. He searched hospitals and alms-houses, he went to Doncaster, but he found no trace of her. After a few years, he made up his mind that she was dead, and contracted his second marriage; but afterward, when the children began to come, he grew terrified lest the first wife should be still living, and should come to claim her rights. I took his sworn statement in regard to Mary Graham. I went to Doncaster, found her relatives, and took their sworn statement. And, to be brief, my lord, I have fully proved the occupant of that grave marked 'Magdalene, in Penistone church-yard, to be the wife of Adelbert Graham!'"

Lord Chilton sat silent, his face very grave. Had he discovered Gwen's origin at last? Her mother had been subject to fits, and her father was a baker in Manchester with a large family! But suddenly his face brightened.

"You are mistaken, inspector!" he exclaimed. "This Mary Graham left her home in January, 1857. The woman who perished on the moor came to Lonemoor in November, 1856, and left Lonemoor just one month later. You see that you are mistaken—"

"Not so, my lord!"

"But the woman gave birth to a child in Lonemoor in November—"

"Not this woman, my lord! There were two women," said the inspector. "One woman came to Lonemoor, gave birth to a child, as you say, and disappeared a month later. But she was not the woman whose body was found on the moor!"

"Not the same woman?"

"By no means, my lord!"

"Then where is she?"

"That you did not employ me to search out," said Mr. Craft. "I don't know what became of her, but one thing I do know—she got away safely, in spite of the storm, the cold, and her weakness. That woman may be living yet, my lord!"

The viscount started. The idea had never occurred to him before.

"The devil takes care of his own, my lord," said the inspector. "He took care of that girl that night; he is probably taking care of her still. She was either a bad lot, or crazy, or both. She is probably in some alms-house or asylum. Would you wish me to find her?"

"No—no!" said Lord Chilton, with a shudder.

"Not at present, at least."

"The body of this woman has been taken up," said Mr. Craft, reflectively. "Her husband and relatives identified the bones by the marks I have mentioned, and Mr. Graham had them removed to Manchester only yesterday. He will put up a suitable tablet with her real name upon it. He intends to make the fact of her death apparent to every one beyond all doubt."

The viscount was still silent. He had much to think of. Doubt, perplexity, and anxieties assailed him.

Mr. Graham and I drove over to the house at Lonemoor yesterday morning," continued Mr. Craft. "Squire Markham had just left home the night previous for London, on his way to the Continent, his servants said. We saw the old housekeeper who had identified Mrs. Graham's body as that of the vagrant whom she had nursed, and we proved to her, beyond all shadow of doubt, that she had been mistaken. Such a scene as followed! The old woman went into a fit, and a doctor was sent for in hot haste. The butler showed symptoms of going into a fit also. He laughed and cried like a woman, and we left him in a state of mind bordering on imbecility. There was some mystery in the case of that vagrant," concluded Mr. Craft, meditatively. "If I could spare the time, I'd hunt out the matter for my own satisfaction."

"I may set you the task a little later," said Lord Chilton. "At present I have other work for you. The child who was born at Lonemoor seventeen years ago, has grown to lovely girlhood, is known as Miss Myner, and has been for some months employed as governess to the Lady Georgina Charteris, Lord Darkwood's daughter. Miss Myner has recently disappeared. I believe that she has gone to the same remote place, under another name. I want to find her."

He told the whole story briefly, showed Gwen's unsigned letter, and answered the interrogatories of the inspector, who looked grave and thoughtful.

"Before engaging upon this new affair," said the

viscount, "let us settle existing accounts. You have done your work well, Mr. Inspector. Let us hope you will succeed equally well with the new problem."

Lord Chilton proceeded to a writing-table, took a blank cheque from his note-book, and filled it in for an amount so generous that Mr. Inspector Craft, whose boast it was that nothing ever astonished him, stared in actual surprise, and muttered his thanks in a bewildered sort of way.

The viscount presently dismissed him, and the detective sauntered away to his quarters at the Darkwood Arms, in Dunholm village.

The evening wore away slowly. Coffees were brought in at ten o'clock. At eleven the bed-room candles were ordered, and the guests departed to their rooms, all but Lord Chilton.

Miss Norreys went to her dressing-room and returned a few minutes later with a long, black silk circular cloak around her, and, oddly enough, a thick veil thrown over her hat and so arranged that at a touch it would fall over her face.

No one had seen her return to the drawing-room, the hall porter having been temporarily absent from his post.

"We will go out at one of these windows, my lord," said the heiress. "Naya will admit us into the house by a private entrance upon our return."

She approached one of the long French windows, opened it, and passed out upon the terrace. Lord Chilton followed her.

The night was dark, but not unpleasant. In the gloom objects could be distinctly traced at a distance of several feet.

"No one knows, except Naya and Aga, that we are out," said Miss Norreys, pausing by a tall garden-vase. "The servants will close the house directly. Ah! Hero is Aga!" she exclaimed, as a dark little figure approached them from the direction of the park. "I will take him with us."

"Where is Mr. Barby?"

"Near the small park entrance to which I have the key. I could not take a carriage at this door without exciting gossip in my household, and the distance to the castle—three miles—is too long to walk. Mr. Barby has a two-seated wagonette, which he will have in waiting for us. He is probably waiting now."

Miss Norreys and Lord Chilton walked rapidly down the wide avenue, followed by Aga. They crossed a corner of the park and passed out at the entrance the lady had designated. Mr. Barby was in waiting, as expected. They entered his wagonette and drove through Dunholm village, halting in the highway at a point nearest Dunholm Castle.

Here they alighted, obtained entrance into the castle grounds through a small gate which the castle-butler had left open for their use, and then slowly threaded the park in the direction of the ruins.

"Does your courage fail, Miss Norreys?" asked the viscount.

She turned her pale, olive face toward him, and he saw her eyes glow through the darkness.

"No!" she answered. "A thousand times no! I could not turn back if I would! My lord, if I knew that death waited for me there among those grim old ruins I would still go on! It seems as if I were driven on by some power beyond and greater than myself! I am going to my revenge!"

CHAPTER LIX.

It will be remembered that Lord Darkwood had visited Shrewsbury upon that same evening, in the hope of hearing something definite in regard to the whereabouts of the missing Gwendoline.

He returned home after eleven o'clock, having been disappointed in his expectations. He entered his library, flung himself in a chair, and rang his bell, summoning his Maltese valet to his presence. Pietro came in, sleek and smooth and impassive as ever.

The marquis regarded him moodily, with dawning distrust of him.

"See here, Pietro," he said, suddenly, "I have been searching everywhere for Miss Myner—my daughter's companion, you know. I have had agents to look high and low for her. I went over to Shrewsbury to-night, expecting news of her, but found none. She's either dead or in some safe refuge, where no one is likely to find her. I am determined to find that girl."

The Maltese bowed, but the suspicious eyes of his master were not able to detect any change in his manner.

"You see, Pietro," continued Lord Darkwood, watching him furtively. "I liked that girl from the first. I shall marry Miss Norreys, but I must find this girl. The agents I have employed have not half your astuteness. Suppose you take up the search.

Find this girl for me, Pietro, and I will give you ten thousand pounds."

He spoke slowly and impressively, watching the valet like a lynx.

Pietro's features quivered for an instant.

"That's a large sum of money to give for the finding of a poor governess!" said the man.

"A large sum—but I will double it! Find this girl and put her in my keeping, Pietro, and I will give you twenty thousand pounds!"

The Maltese drew his breath more quickly. The reward tempted him sorely. His captive had held out most unexpectedly, and with the utmost bravery against starvation, solitude, darkness, and terrors innumerable.

He had not seen her for two nights, and he hoped that when he should visit her again she would consent to marry him.

But what if she should still refuse? What if she should really die rather than to accept freedom as his wife?

Why, then he should lose her, the fortune he had expected to gain through her, and this sum which Lord Darkwood offered him for her discovery. Would it not be wise to accept the sum offered him and give up the girl to her enemy?

Lord Darkwood noted his hesitation and caught at it with eagerness. His lordship began to believe that the valet might know something after all of Gwendoline.

"Think what you can do with twenty thousand pounds, Pietro!" he said, insinuatingly. "You can buy an estate. You can have a valet of your own—"

"Let me consider your proposition till morning, signore," interrupted Pietro. "I will decide to-night what I will do. If I conclude to take up this search and earn the sum you offer me, I will tell you in the morning."

"Why not decide to-night?"

"I have no time. I have work to do. I must carry out the remains of the loose dirt on the grave below, so that no trace of your crime will remain. I wish to finish the job to-night, in order that I may receive from you the reward you offered me for it. I should like the money in the morning."

The marquis nodded assent.

"I don't know how long I shall sit up, Pietro," he said. "You may as well be about your work. Jenks can attend me in my room. And, Pietro, you had better take up my offer. Somehow, I have a conviction that if you take hold of this search, you will find the girl."

"I am generally successful in what I undertake. We'll see, signore. I'll give you my answer in the morning."

He retired from the room.

"That rascal will bear watching!" the marquis muttered. "If he had but suspected her identity he might have been the cause of her disappearance. But there was her letter! She went off of her own accord—the letter proves that. Yet he may have some suspicion of her refuge. I'll urge him anew in the morning. And I'll watch him! Bother him! I'm uneasy!"

And the more he thought, the more uneasy he grew.

Pietro glided along the hall, and as he ascended the stairs the butler extinguished the lights in the state apartments and made ready for the adventure he had in mind.

He had found opportunity during the evening to secure the keys of the ruins, and these were now upon his person.

It was not necessary for him to remain to attend to the library lights.

He had secured all the doors, and it was now close upon twelve o'clock.

His duties were ended until to-morrow.

As Pietro went up to his room, the butler, Morris, let himself out into the grounds by a private door, which he locked behind him.

He knew that Mr. Sutton had gone out an hour before, and was wandering about the grounds.

He kept in the shadow of the trees, and passed around to the vicinity of the ruins.

At a little door set deep in the stone-wall, he found a little group awaiting him—Miss Norreys, Lord Chilton, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Barby, and the Hindu, Aga.

Mr. Barby had brought a couple of lanterns, and the butler was similarly provided.

The lanterns were distributed, and Morris unlocked the door, and they crept into the ruins.

"I know the way," said Morris, "every step of it. Follow me!"

He led them through passages and rooms to the staircase that led below, unlocking such doors as were locked.

They descended the stairs and stood in the grim stone corridor below.

It was frightfully dark, and the light of the lanterns seemed to render the surrounding darkness more dense by contrast.

"I feel like a burglar," said Mr. Barsby, nervously. "I hope that we are not getting ourselves into some scrape. I presume Lord Darkwood could send us to prison for this midnight entrance into his premises."

"I will take all the risk," said Miss Norreys. "Come! Let us hasten towards the farthest dungeon."

She led the way in her eagerness and impatience.

They traversed passage after passage, guided by Morris, whose remembrance of those subterranean corridors was not so vivid as he had declared.

They made one or two wrong turnings, and Morris at last confessed that he was not quite sure which passage next to take.

They paused in dismay.

"Hark!" whispered Miss Norreys, suddenly, growing white as death. "Hide the lights! Quick!"

She obeyed her on the instant.

The next moment they beheld, turning into the same corridor in which they found themselves, a man bearing a lantern and a basket.

It was Pietro!

They crouched against the wall, silent as the grave, until he was far in advance of them, and then, mute as the dead, but with hearts beating like drums, they crept after him.

He turned into another passage—they also turned at the same point, a little later.

It was well that they had been so cautious, for Pietro had paused only a few feet distant, and was unlocking a door. He opened it, took a jug of water and a loaf of bread from his basket and carried them into the cell.

The faces of those who followed him flamed at the sight. They crept closer—to the very door—and stopped.

Ah! what was that they saw?

A grim and horrible cell—Pietro standing with demon-like exultation on his visage, the lantern held above his head, and, crouching in an arm-chair, a slight and wasted figure in the deep shadow.

They held their breaths. The little figure in the chair rose up and crept into the light. Wan and woe, with bronze gold hair hanging over a piteous face, thin, wan to a shadow, yet beautiful still as an angel—it was Gwen!

They stood in a very trance of bewilderment.

"I have come for your final answer to-night, Miss Winter," said Pietro, in his silky voice. "Will you marry me? Pause and think before you answer. If you agree to marry me, I will release you to-night. If you refuse, I will sell you to your deadly enemy, and you will die to-morrow."

The girl's wan face flushed with her undying courage and spirit.

"I am not afraid to die!" she said. "Let me die; Dog! Cawnd! I tell you again that I would rather die than accept life upon your terms. I——"

The sound of her voice had broken the trance that held Lord Chilton silent. With a yell that rang through those dungeons like a wild alarm, he dashed into the cell, knocked Pietro over as if he had been a wooden image, and gathered Gwen up into his arms in an agony of tenderness and yearning.

Pietro picked himself up in a panic, and dashed out at the door to find himself a prisoner in the hands of Mr. Sutton and the Hindoo.

He glared at them like a maniac.

Miss Norreys rushed into the dungeon, and with a look that compelled Lord Chilton's obedience, so wild that it was implored, took Gwen from his arms. She kissed the sweet face, now rigid in a swoon, clasped the hands, and called upon the girl to awaken, in tones pitiful enough to call back the dead.

When Gwen returned to consciousness, it was to find her lover and Miss Norreys bending over her, both tender and full of passionate love. She gave a hand to each, and shuddered as she glanced around her with a look of terror.

"You are safe, darling!" said the viscount. "Oh, Heaven! what you must have suffered!"

"You are safe now, darling!" repeated Miss Norreys. "I am ready to die now! But, no—we have more to do still——"

"There is another prisoner," said Gwen, feebly, in a lower dungeon! Pietro has the key! There it is, attached to the key in this lock!"

Miss Norreys sprang forward and snatched the key.

"Let us lose no time," she cried. "Bring Gwen and come!"

Mr. Sutton and Mr. Barsby had expressed their horror of Gwen's imprisonment, and had shaken hands with her in token of their delight at her rescue. Then Lord Chilton took his betrothed in his arms—ah! how light she was!—as if he never meant to let her go again.

Mr. Barsby and the Hindoo marched Pietro between them, and Miss Norreys ran on in advance, side by side by the now half-trembled Morris.

They descended some steps and paused at a locked door. They opened it, and out sprang a man wild of eye and aspect, with a long, fair beard flowing on his breast, and long hair dropping on his shoulders—a man whose ghastly pallor told of long imprisonment.

But despite his pallor and wildness, his stately carriage remained. He was noble in his appearance, with a grand and haughty head, and solitude and darkness and all the horrors of his long imprisonment had not cowed his spirit.

"At last!" he said, slowly; "at last!" and now his voice took an exultant tone. "At last! I thank Thee, oh Heaven!"

(To be continued.)

FASHIONABLE FOLLIES.

I USED to stand at my shop door of an evening in my shirt-sleeves, when the shutters were up, and enjoy the luxuries of a churchwarden and the previous day's paper, got at half price, from an adjoining coffee house; and now I have been forced to set up smoking-room in my villa residence, and provide the choicest brands of cigars for the delectation of my friends and those of my sons. I have a garden, of course, and, by necessity, a gardener; but I am under the control of that functionary, who is aided and abetted by my wife and daughters. I had a snug sort of summer-house, where a pipe was permitted, but space was wanted for a croquet lawn, and it was swept away.

My wife was formerly in the habit of getting a new dress or bonnet when her old ones were worn out, and then a dressmaker came to the house and did her work thoroughly and cheaply. Now my wife and daughters patronise a fashionable West-end establishment, and, whether they want them or not, must have new outfitts with the quarterly change of fashion.

The local circulating library, and an occasional visit to the play, once sufficed for all the outside luxuries; but now there are half-a-dozen first-class subscriptions to Mudie's, and a box at every theatre on first nights, demanded by my dutiful children, beside winter garden fellowships, skating-rink fees, and heaven knows what else. Now, why should this be? I am richer, abler, to pay for them, in a sense; but I don't care for them, and don't enjoy them.

The subscriptions to Mudie's library do me no good, for my wife, sons, and daughters get the books, and it is almost needless to say none of them suit me. When I ask them to bring me a certain work, it is seldom to be had, according to their account; till I'm sick of waiting for it, and can't enjoy it when it arrives. Society demands all these concessions; it is said; but what business has society to dictate to me?

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to have my friends about me; but whereas I used to invite my cronies and neighbours to a quiet dinner and supper, my wife and family issue invitations to a horde of people I don't know and don't care for; and my dear old friends and myself are voted bores, and consigned to some out-of-the-way corner to mope and yawn, and are not even allowed to do that in quiet. Again, why should prosperity entail this misery upon me?

A sensible chatabout politics, a well-played rubber, an enjoyable joke, are quite out of the question; and then I am kept out of bed half the night by the scraping of catgut and the clatter of dancing.

You may say I am a misanthrope, a curmudgeon, a skinflint, an old fogey, or anything else you please; but I believe I could spend my surplus income much more rationally and advantageously. Why don't I? I simply can't. Society won't allow it, my wife won't hear of it, my family stand aghast at the very mention of such a thing.

And yet, with all this yearly outlay of money, I am not enjoying the fruit of my hard-earned success. Everybody is in the same position, I am told. And pray what good is that to me? Well, it is the penalty accompanying social advance. Then I almost wish I had never been called upon to pay income-tax on four figures. But that's not all.

At every turn there's the parson, the district visitor, the secretary of this, and the accredited agent of that, society wheeling my wife or myself into giving subscriptions, which I am confident in my heart are maladministered, or applied to purposes that will never warrant the money spent. Why do I give them? For the same reason that I do every other foolish thing—because everybody does it. Haugh! I'm sick of the whole system, and would break with it to-morrow if the chains were not of adamant.

TRUE WORTH.

CHAPTER XIII.

TURN we now to a more pleasant theme than the vices, follies, and extravagances of Robert Arnold.

Mr. Benson has gone on prospering, and to prosper.

He has maintained a steady course of industry, fair dealing, and integrity, and has never worked for anyone who has not gladly availed himself a second time of his services.

On every man having dealings with him, he left impressions for good, and he was on the high road to fortune.

Fame of a certain kind he has already attained—the fame of which he might justly be proud—in being called and known as a just and honest man, and he had obtained a position in his profession of which many of more years, and more experience, might justly feel proud.

He lived yet in his little cottage, for the party purchasing from him had changed his mind as to its present use, and was glad to retain so good a tenant at a mere nominal rent, considering the price which he had paid for the ground.

He had finished the houses which he was erecting for Mr. Arnold, and awaited that gentleman's return from the Continent to close the transactions with him.

The four months appointed for his absence had expired, and he was expected in the next steamer; and, sure enough, the next steamer brought him.

Very soon after his arrival, he went to his houses to examine them, and took with him one of the most celebrated builders of the day, who not only could find no fault with them, but pronounced them built in the very best and most workmanlike manner.

On his return to his office, he directed one of his clerks to send for Mr. Benson the next day at two o'clock, and on the next day, at the appointed hour, they stood again face to face.

Mr. Benson had a roll of papers under his arm, and after the ordinary compliments of the day, as if they had only parted a week before, Mr. Arnold said, abruptly:

"Well, Mr. Benson, I have been up to look at those houses."

"I hope you like them, sir. I have tried to do justice to your good opinion of me. I trust you will have them examined by competent builders?"

"I have done so, and am perfectly satisfied. Now, how much do I owe you?"

"There," said Mr. Benson, laying his bundle of papers on the desk before Mr. Arnold, "there are the accounts of every pound I have expended on the houses. You will find vouchers there for every nail in them, sir."

"Yes, I dare say that's all right," and he opened them carelessly.

Glaucous at the total, he raised his eyes calmly to Mr. Benson, and said, very quietly:

"I don't see any charge for your services here."

"No, I have not made any. I leave that entirely to yourself, sir."

"Let me see," said Mr. Arnold, taking up a pencil, and making a few calculations; "you have expended some two thousand pounds more than I find you have drawn. How did you get that?"

"Mr. Hardman lent it to me on some securities he holds of mine."

"Of course you paid interest?"

"Yes. One cannot borrow money now-a-days without interest."

"But you have not charged any interest on these bills?" queried Mr. Arnold.

"Not a penny, sir. There are the bills for every piece of wood, iron, or stone put in them exactly to their cost."

"Well, I don't expect you to work without some profit. And you don't choose to make any charge?"

"None, sir. Do as you choose, and if my work suits you, I shall be happy to have any further orders."

"You may be sure of that, Mr. Benson. Robert," he said, to his book-keeper, "hand me the cheque-book."

And he proceeded to fill up a cheque, which, done and signed, he handed to Mr. Benson, who, glancing at it, saw that it was for eight hundred pounds more than the balance actually due, giving him a handsome profit on his materials, and a compensation equally handsome for his own personal supervision.

It was more—much more—than he had expected; but he knew his customer so well, he dared not remark upon it. He contented himself, therefore, with

thanking him heartily for his generosity, and concluded by hoping that he would confide to him any further business in his line which he might have.

"You shall hear from me again, Mr. Benson. I am perfectly satisfied with you, and your mode of doing business."

Mr. Benson took leave of his new found and eccentric friend, quite at a loss what to make of him, and wondering if he should ever see him again; but perfectly satisfied that he had acted fairly, honourably and conscientiously, and equally satisfied with the reward he had received.

Mrs. Benson was seated at the table, in her small, but neatly furnished parlour of her cottage home; the basket containing her work was beside her, and the homely character of the work on which she was engaged showed the domestic, industrious, housewife.

Nelly and George were asleep in their respective beds, and Mrs. Benson was awaiting her husband's return. The tea-kettle was humming in the kitchen, the table, with its pure white cloth and its equally pure white china, was spread.

"Gaily, happily, and contentedly, she was working, her thoughts divided between the loved ones who were sleeping within reach of her anxious ear, and the loved one, whose coming she looked for with such fond expectancy.

A tap at the door—for there were no bells in the house, scolded her—and pausing in her work, she listened to hear the footsteps of the servant who answered the summons.

In a few moments, the door of the room in which she was sitting was opened, and the servant ushered in a female—a stranger—but one who, at the first glance, commanded her attention.

"Mrs. Benson, I hope," said the visitor, as the door was closed by the retreating servant.

"That is my name" said the hostess, dropping her work, and looking rather amazedly at the stranger, and most unexpected visitor, for she was young, decidedly good-looking, and interesting.

"Oh, madam, how can I favor them you, and your noble, generous husband?" was the exclamation of the stranger, as she rushed forward and seized the unresisting hand of the astonished Mrs. Benson. "I have longed, and wished, and prayed that I might see those to whom I was under such great obligations, and I have now only dared to call."

"I saw you do not know me," she continued. "Of course you do not. My name is Scott—Susan Scott."

Without waiting for further introduction, Mrs. Benson at once comprehended the whole object of this strange visit, and the reader need hardly be informed as to the personality of Susan Scott.

"Really, Mrs. Scott, I am glad to see you," said Mrs. Benson, rising, for she had thus far remained seated in mute astonishment. "I am truly happy to see you. My husband has often spoken—"

"Heaven bless him! and Heaven bless you!" interrupted the visitor, for it was indeed Susan Scott.

"I have called to thank you and him for my present happiness. Oh, madam, how I do thank you!"

"Look here, Susan," said Mrs. Benson, withdrawing her hand, and wiping her moistened eyes, for well she knew the history of that unhappy woman. "I don't want any thanks. If you want to make me very happy, just sit down, and let me cry for a few minutes;" and sure enough, she did throw herself into her chair again, and gave vent to a good, hearty burst of tears.

Mrs. Scott sympathized wonderfully with her, for she threw herself upon her knees, and burying her face in the lap of Mrs. Benson, joined in her tears and sobs.

There—that will do—I feel better now. Get up Susan—do get up, and sit down by my side. Oh, I am so glad to see you!" and Mrs. Benson gently raised the weeping, trembling creature, who seemed helpless for all but tears.

"Dear—good—kind—"

"H—ah—there, stop," said Mrs. Benson, wiping her eyes, "are you really Susan Scott? are you the woman—?"

"Yes; I am the happy, grateful wife of a happy, grateful husband. I could not resist the impulse which brought me here to-night, to thank you, and your dear—kind—noble—generous husband. Oh, madam, what do we not owe to you?"

"Well, I don't thank you, Susan, for making me cry. And you are Susan Scott;" and Mrs. Benson pushed back the glossy hair from the fair forehead of her visitor, and gazed for a moment in silence upon her eloquent features; and you are really Susan Scott. I declare I almost love you, Susan."

"And I declare that I do love you and yours, with

all my heart and soul," was the enthusiastic reply of the agitated woman. "Oh, Mrs. Benson! how I have longed to see you, and thank you for your husband, for he would never receive my thanks, even while he must have known that my heart was overflowing with gratitude."

"Never mind that. He knows and feels, and so do I, that he has only done as he would be done by; so don't talk of that any more. Why, Susan, you are a beautiful woman," continued Mrs. Benson, gazing with affectionate kindness in the face of the blushing, excited woman now seated by her side. "And how you must have suffered."

"Oh, madam—" "Don't call me madam, Susan. I love you already, and madam sounds very harshly to my ears."

"Then, my angel—my—"

"Susan Scott, I am a woman as yourself. I love my husband as you do your own. I am only a loving woman. I believe I feel for the sorrows, and trials, and troubles of others, and I have felt for you, for my husband has told me of you. Call me by some other name. I am only such as you are, except that Mrs. Scott has prepared me above you."

"Mrs. Benson, I called this evening," said Mrs. Scott, rising "to thank you—to tell you that I and my children pray for you nightly, that we love and honour your very name, and that—"

What she would have said was interrupted by the opening of the parlour door by the servant, who ushered in an elderly gentleman, a stranger to both the inmates of the room, but of whose entrance into the house they had been entirely ignorant, so deeply engrossed were they with their own thoughts and feelings. Mr. Benson is not in, I see," said the stranger, advancing to the centre of the room, and laying his hat upon the table by the side of Mrs. Benson's work.

"No, sir; I expect him every moment. He is seated. He is generally home by seven."

"Well, I will sit down, as I come to see him. You have a nice snug house here," he said, seating himself, and looking around with the air of one competent to pass an opinion, and entitled to express it."

"Large enough for our means, and for our wants, sir," replied Mrs. Benson, courteously. "We have a small family, and—"

"Don't need much room," interrupted the stranger, not allowing her to finish her sentence.

"Sit down, Susan," said Mrs. Benson to Mrs. Scott, who, on the advent of the stranger, had turned as if to leave the room. "My husband would not like it if you left without seeing him, now that you are here."

Mrs. Scott turned to resume the chair which she had quitted as the stranger entered the room, and as she did so, the light fell full upon her face.

Starting from his chair, the stranger hurriedly approached her, and laying a hand upon her shoulder, said, in tones of the deepest emotion, "I beg your pardon, madam, but may I ask your name? You resemble a friend who was once very dear to me."

"Susan Scott, sir," she replied, rising, and gently removing the hand from her shoulder.

"You are married?" he said, in a tone of inquiry.

"I am, sir." "Your name before your marriage? you look so much like her, I cannot be mistaken."

"Susan Morton. I was named after my mother."

"I know it. I was sure I could not be mistaken," and the stranger sank back into his seat, covering his face with his clasped hands; while his companions gazed alternately at him, and at each other, in mute astonishment.

For a few moments this silence was maintained unbroken, but at length the stranger raised his hands from his moistened eyes, and rising, he moved towards Mrs. Scott, who sat shrinking, and trembling, lost in wonder and amazement.

Pushing the hair from her fair forehead, he gazed silently at her for a few moments; and returning to his chair, he sank rather than seated himself in it, and gave way to a burst of irrepressible emotion, while the females gazed at him with great astonishment, thinking, very possibly, that he might be some escaped lunatic.

Whatever might have been said or done at the moment, was interrupted by the unannounced entrance of Mr. Benson, who, as he caught sight of his visitor, sprang forward with an exhibition of astonishment and respect, singularly blended, and said, "Why, Mr. Arnold, I am very happy to see you in my house. My wife, sir," and he turned to his wife, who was as much astonished on hearing the name of the stranger, as her husband was at seeing him there, for she was thoroughly familiar with his kindness to, and confidence in her husband.

"Yes, I know her. We have had quite a chat,

Mr. Benson," and the old gentleman busied himself in wiping alternately his eyes and spectacles. "We know each other now very well—don't we, Mrs. Benson? I know you thought me an idiot. Come, tell the truth. Didn't you think I had escaped from the asylum?"

CHAPTER XIV.

"No matter what she thought, Mr. Arnold, as she knows who you are, I will answer for what she thinks now of one to whom we are under many and deep obligations."

"Tut, tut! never mind that now; that is what I would call bush from any one else; but I know you are above anything like fawning or flattery. I came here for a singular purpose, and hardly know to tell you what it was; but I have been much surprised, and as much pleased at meeting this young woman. How did you come to know her?"

"Because he is the best and kindest and noblest of men," interrupted Susan, advancing towards Mr. Arnold and interrupting the reply which Mr. Benson was about to make. "Because he has a heart to feel for the woes of others—because his hand is as open as his heart. I—we—my husband, my children, owe to him all we have and all we are. But for him, we should have starved to death; but for him, my husband would have filled a drunkard's grave, and my little ones with myself would have found a resting-place in the workhouse. He is an angel of goodness, sir—an honour to mankind. It is the anniversary of my marriage day, and I came here to thank him and her (and she turned to Mrs. Benson), for making it so bright, so joyous, and so happy."

"You must excuse her," said Mr. Benson, actually blushing at his praise so eloquently and so truthfully bestowed by the earnest, grateful woman. "She is the wife of my foreman, sir, and thinks she is under obligations to me, because I did unto her as I should have wished others to do unto mine in similar circumstances."

"Yes, I see. I know all about it now. And you are the daughter of Susan Morton?" said Mr. Arnold, advancing towards Mrs. Scott, and again pushing the hair from her forehead. "You are very like her. She married a second time, did she not?"

"Yes, sir, and that was the cause of my misfortunes and unhappiness—excuse me, sir, I did not mean to speak of myself."

"But I want you to do so; not now, however—some other time. Mr. Benson, you have not had your supper yet? I will join you."

"With all my heart. Sit down, Mr. Arnold. Come, Susy, sit down and make yourself at home."

"Thank you, Mr. Benson; not this time. I came here only to thank you for—"

"Never mind now, Susy. I understand all about that. Just sit down, and we'll hear that on your next marriage day," said Mr. Benson, half jocularly.

"I cannot stay. Henry will wonder where I am, and I must hurry home to get his supper ready. Besides, I have left the children alone. I must go now, indeed I must," she said with an earnestness which showed that her heart yearned to accept the proffered kindness, but her duty called her away.

"Good night, Susan," said Mr. Arnold, taking her hand, and gazing in her expressive face with an earnestness that caused the blood to mantle her cheeks. "I am glad, very glad—I am thankful to have met you, and rely upon it, you shall hear from me again."

"If you must go, Susan," said Mrs. Benson, "take those to the children," and she handed a parcel neatly wrapped up in a napkin. "Never mind what it is. It may please them."

"Heaven bless you, sir," said the grateful wife, as with tearful eyes she approached Mr. Benson. "I can never be sufficiently grateful for your boundless kindness to me and mine. I can only thank you and pray for you. Good night."

And drawing her shawl around her, she wiped her streaming eyes with the corner, and took her leave without daring to trust herself to utter further words.

"Come, Mr. Benson, tell me, how did you come across that young woman? I would not have missed seeing her for half my fortune. Tell me what you know about her."

"About her family or her circumstances before I saw her, I know nothing; but all I have seen of her justifies my best opinion of her as worthy every regard and esteem."

And while Mrs. Benson was preparing the evening meal, her husband narrated briefly and with becoming modesty his first meeting with Mrs. Scott, his subsequent interest in her behalf, and the happy results which had attended his efforts to reform the seemingly lost husband.

Mr. Arnold's good sense and knowledge of human



[A SINGULAR PROPOSITION.]

nature, served readily to fill up what Mr. Benson chose to omit in his narrative, and he felt an emotion of pride and pleasure that he had been enabled to serve one who was so ready to obey the precepts of the golden rule.

"Now that we are alone, and as Mrs. Benson is not frightened at me," said Mr. Arnold, when they were seated at the supper-table, "I will tell you what brought me here. You know I am a bachelor, and have no relations but that extravagant scapegrace, my nephew Robert. I am boarding; I am tired of it. It is a cheerless, lonesome life. I have no home, in truth no resource but my own thoughts for pleasure, and I want some change. I am getting too old to continue in this mode of life much longer."

"I came up this evening, to tell the truth, to see if I should like your wife as well as I did yourself when I first saw you, and if I did, I had a proposition to make to you. I believe I am a rough, plain-speaking man, and therefore, Mrs. Benson, let me say in my own way, I do like you. I believe you every way worthy of your husband, and I could not pay you a higher compliment; and now I have said that I will tell you the proposition I wish to make. It will add something to your troubles and cares, but I will make any compensation that you may ask. I want you to take one of those houses you have just finished, Mr. Benson. I will furnish it—give me a room, and let me feel I have a home, and when I die, the house is yours."

"Mr. Arnold," said his host, actually crimsoning to the temples, "You are not surely in earnest. What, you the wealthy—"

"Never mind my wealth, Benson. I can't eat it, and I can't carry it with me. I tell you I am lonesome as I live now. My nephew has a fine house, and lives in splendid style, but it is not a home, after all, such as I want, and though he would be glad enough to have me there, I would not go, and be subject to the noise, and bustle, and confusion of his fashionable friends, as he calls them, for all he will ever be worth, and little enough that will be if he don't carry less sail."

"But really, Mr. Arnold, I cannot afford to live in the style suited to your position."

"You can afford to live in a style suited to my tastes, and that is a great deal better, sir. Come, sir—come, madam, what do you say?"

"Why, really, Mr. Arnold," said Mrs. Benson, who had listened in amazement to this singular proposition

from one who, an hour before, was an utter stranger to her, save as she had heard of him from her husband, "I do not know what to say. This house is quite suited to our means, and we have abundance of room. If you are in earnest—"

"I never jest, madam, with those I esteem," said Mr. Arnold with unwonted earnestness. "I am in earnest. As to your means, it surely won't cost any more to live in one house without any rent, than it would in this one where you must pay something. I don't want show or fashion; I want comfort. I want a home. I don't feel towards you as though you were strangers, and I should like to make a home with you. Come, sir, you know my way of doing business—yea or nay. I know it will give you some trouble."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Benson, promptly, with a glance at his wife, which she rightly interpreted.

"That's all I wanted. The matter is settled then."

"But what am I to do with this house. I declare I shall leave it with regret. I began life here, and—"

"Mr. Scott is a perfectly steady man now?" queried Mr. Arnold, apparently not heeding the last remark.

"Perfectly. He is a thoroughly reformed man, and as truly as steel."

"Then put him in here, and I will pay his rent. You need not look surprised; I have my own reasons, and should like to do that much for the sake of old memories."

"Certainly, Mr. Arnold. But really I hardly know how I shall feel in such a house as yours, after living here in this dear humble little cottage."

"Well, you can't tell till you try. Now, madam, you can busy yourself in getting the other house ready as soon as you choose, and the quicker you get in, the happier you will make me. I long for a home. I have no time to attend to furniture. Do you go and order what is proper. Sends the bills to me, and please to remember, madam, that I love comfort, and he placed a strong emphasis on the word, which Mrs. Benson, with a woman's shrewdness, interpreted as meaning the opposite of fashion.

"You know we have two children," said Mrs. Benson, hesitatingly, "and I am afraid, as you are not accustomed to them, they may annoy you."

"What is a home without children, madam? I don't care if you had half a dozen."

"Well, I see you are determined to take your

chances, and all we can say is, that it will make us happy to add to your comfort and pleasure."

"Then that's settled. When shall we move in?"

"Oh," said Mr. Benson, laughing, "you must not be impatient for your comforts. I won't keep you away from them any longer than I can avoid, but you know women have a great many things to do to get a house in order. You must leave that to me."

The evening was passed in cheerful, pleasant conversation, and when Mr. Arnold reluctantly took his leave, it was with an impression, that if any person could make a home happy for a lonely man like himself, it would be the members of the family from whom he had just parted.

It is not necessary to enter into a detail of the events of the next two weeks.

Mr. Benson had his hands full in purchasing the furniture, and getting the house in readiness for occupancy, and Mr. Benson, who had never neglected his business, found abundant amusement each evening in listening to the details of her daily labours and achievements.

The house was at length ready, and with real regret Mr. Benson and his family took leave of the pleasant cottage which had been their happy home for so many years, and it was given up to Scott and his wife, who were infinitely surprised at the liberality of Mr. Arnold, but who, acting under instructions from Mr. Benson, forbore to mention to him that they were aware of his agency in their present happiness.

Mr. Arnold was duly notified that his rooms were ready for him, and without any word, more than if he was leaving one boarding house for another, his trunks were packed, and he was duly installed in his new home.

He did not express a word of comment upon the furniture of the house, nor the arrangement of his own rooms, but on the morning after he had occupied them for the first time, when he came to the dining-room, where the morning meal was awaiting him, he went up to Mrs. Benson, before she was aware of his intentions, imprinted a hearty kiss upon her fresh and glowing cheek, and turning to her husband, shook his hand with a warmth and earnestness which spoke volumes. He was happy, and heart could not wish for more.

(To be continued.)



[HER FATE.]

REUBEN;

ONLY A GIPSY.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"THERE'S something rum about you, continued Smiley. For a month or two you had what I calls mopes. You don't drink up the toddy, and you don't care for a song or a lark. Glum and mum is your line, and you sits as silent as a parson's parrot. Ain't I right?"

There was no reply, and the grumbler went on, heedless of the steady regard of the clear, dark eyes in front of him.

"Then you're a deal fonder of carrying the rifle than working the spade or the washer, and you makes a bargain with us that you shall get the game. You goes roaming all over the place, and we don't know what your game is—I say we don't know what your motives is. S'posin', for instance, as you mightn't be on the square, what's easier than for you, when you're out riding miles away from camp, to drop a wink to the fossickers and say, 'my mates had a find this 'ere week, and if you drops down on 'em to-night you'll find the swag buried in a certain tent.' I say what's easier—"

He stopped, for Arthur had risen to his feet and was looking down with pale, indignant face and flashing eyes.

There was a murmur at the hideous suggestion of treachery, and Ned growled a loud and heavy imprecation at the speaker.

"Put a bullet through him, Arthur," said Matthews. "He's enough to make a saint turn body-snatcher. Shut up, Smiley."

"There's free speech in this ere camp," snarled Smiley. "I aint accusing no one. What I says is proper enough, and if it riles him, why, I says, where the cap fits let it lie."

"He's right," said Arthur, sinking down again with a grim smile. "Have you anything more to say?"

"Only this 'ere: for all we knows you may have been up on them hills while you've been on the hunt and a found the gold already. If so, it's only natural as you should want to get away on the quiet and square. Once up there with your find who'd ever set eyes on ye again?"

There was a pretty general murmur of disgust, but one or two of the evil-disposed, judging the accused by their own standard, looked as if there was something in Smiley's insinuations.

"Is that all?" asked Arthur.

"I've had my say, mate, and no offence."

"You suggest that I am traiter enough to give the fossickers information and to beg leave of absence on pretence of prospecting that I may secure a secret find. That is so, is it not?" said Arthur, quietly.

"All I says is that such things might happen," growled Smiley.

"You are no coward, Smiley," said Arthur, with a quiet smile.

"I've had half a mind a dozen times during the last quarter of an hour to shoot you.

There's not a hand or a voice here that would have been raised against me had I done so. So I say you are not a coward, and you will not refuse the offer I make you."

"What's that?" asked Smiley, suspiciously.

The rest looked on in intense silence. One or two who were lying in an outside ring dragged themselves within the inner circle and gazed at the faces of the speakers in turn.

"I offer you the chance of finding the secret find which you think I have upon the hills. One of us two shall prospect them and be answerable to the camp. We will decide which it shall be by a roll of the dice. The start shall be to-morrow, with a blanket a day's food, a bowie knife, a rifle, the usual kit, and one ounce of gold. He who goes shall be answerable to the camp whenever it comes across him—whether it be in three months or three years, and two-thirds of the gold he finds shall be set aside for division amongst the gang."

There was a murmur of applause and that satisfaction which the reckless feel at some fresh piece of daring.

Only one voice was raised in objection, and that was Ned's.

"No, no; what gross impudence. Why should you go to the bad for a idiot like Smiley? I've half a mind to settle this game by a short cut," and the leader of the gang drew his revolver.

"Put the barker aside," said Arthur, with a kindly smile. "Either Smiley or I leave this camp to-morrow. Smiley, you shall throw first."

And taking up a dice-box, he handed it to the now pale, and more than ever suspicious Smiley.

"You do not refuse, of course?" said Arthur, quietly. "If you did I should demand a trial of your courage. You are a good shot, and I would give

you due chance of putting a bullet through the supposed traitor. I'd rather you'd do that than rob me of my honour, friend. Come, decide, take up the box or your revolver, for one of us leaves the camp to-morrow—whether dead or alive, is for you to decide!"

As he spoke he draw his revolver, looked at the priming, and then laid it down beside him.

Smiley's eyes shifted round the faces in the fire-light.

There was no compromise to be hoped for.

Life was counted as of little value in that wild, head-long time, and he knew that the man he had slandered and insulted would keep his word.

He knew that the slight brown hand which held the short pipe so lightly, could aim with an accuracy little short of the supernatural.

With a dry, rasping attempt at a laugh, he caught up the dice-box.

"Highest or lowest?" asked George.

"Highest," said Smiley, and with a shaking hand, cast the dice.

There was a murmur of excitement.

Smiley had thrown fifteen.

"One thrown settles it," said Ned, sternly. "Better be quietly put away with an ounce of lead, you idiot, than climb up there to starvation at the bottom of a gully-hole! You'll go through, or I'll bullet you myself!"

"He has not lost yet," said Arthur, taking the dice-box, and looking full into the shifting eyes of his opponent, with a quiet scorn.

"Here goes, boys," and up went the dice.

"A treble six!" exclaimed Ned, with a sorrowful oath. "By Heaven, Arthus goes!"

George, quick as lightning, snatched a revolver from his breast.

"All through you, you hound!" he exclaimed, pointing it at Smiley. "He'd have thought no more of it, if you hadn't worried him, like the imp you are! Take that!" and he fired.

But an arm had been stretched out, and knocked the revolver up.

"Shame!" cried Arthur, hurling the discharged weapon into the darkness. "Leave that sort of thing to the fossickers, George, lad! We honest men abide by our word. Give me your hand, Smiley. You don't face the hills, and you've had your snarl! I've got my way, and I've proved that I'm not the cur you'd have made me out. All well—good night!" and with another general adieu the winner of the game rolled himself up in his blanket and turned over to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE summer's sun was sinking slowly behind the hills of Deane Hollow, and behind the sunblinds of Dingley Hall, falling at last upon Olive's deep-tinted hair, as she lay back in a low chair, listlessly fingering some needlework.

Time had passed slowly and sorrowfully since that day when Sir Edward heard the tidings of his great loss.

The panic storm had arisen and swept away with a wild roar many an ancient home and noble fortune.

So engrossed in self-pity, people had little sympathy with the baronet who had yielded to the temptations of avarice and embarked in speculations, the nature of which he was totally unacquainted with.

He had no one to blame but himself, said the world, and it added scornfully that such men as he should be made to feel their sin when the punishment fell upon them for an avarice and greed as unnatural as it was unmeasurable.

Yet Sir Edward was an object of pity. Liable for immense sums, he strove hard against a stream which at one time threatened to sweep the whole estate from him.

Month after month of the cruelest uncertainty and suspense, month after month of endless harm and confusion.

Hordes of men had written and visited him, the widow and fatherless cursed him while they wept, and all he had brought upon his own head by wandering beyond his depth.

The end even yet had not come, and Olive, as she sat striving to work, yet unable to do so, wondered how much longer she would be allowed to sit idly enjoying the luxury and beauty of the house which she loved better than life itself.

Even as she looked signs of the greatest calamity which had fallen on them were visible to her eyes.

The army of creditors had been discharged, and the once well kept grounds had rapidly, almost, it seemed, maliciously, grown wild and unkempt.

The stable, which so short a time since had been full of life and stir, were now hushed into something more than silence.

The horses were sold, the grooms gone. Brag alone remained to mourn over the days that had fallen upon him.

At a little distance men could be seen felling some of the timber, and in her mind's eye Olive almost called up the picture of the hideous little tickets marking the lots of the sale which all men said must be.

At the left rose the thatched homesteads of Styles' farm, and there again a woeful change reminded her of another sad event and consequent change.

The once well-kept little garden-court was a wilderness indeed to behold. The ivy had grown in wild confusion and neglect over the windows, the fence was in bad repair, and the farmer, as neglected and blighted as his home, looked the wreck of his former self.

All this Olive could see, and had seen and wept over for the last twelve months.

She could weep no longer now, only wait and wait for fresh trouble, glad of a rest or a break in the monotony of confusion and misery.

Now her only resource was in looking back to that time when, free from care and innocent of head, she trod across the hills with the handsome gipsy by her side.

Of him she knew it was both wrong and foolish to think, for gradually, with extreme delicacy, had been poured into her ears the story of his villainy.

She knew—from old Griley's wrinkled lips—that Reuben, whom she had once trusted and loved, had betrayed and decoyed the artless girl who had trusted him, and that he had played the rogue with the money entrusted to his charge.

To her, as she sat on this summer evening, the world looked very bad and very wicked.

Life was a hollow dream from which the awakening could not come too soon.

The sound of carriage wheels broke her reverie. She looked up and saw that the Grange landau was driving from the house.

A slight flush, whether of diallike or dread it would be difficult to say, crimsoned her pale cheeks.

If a change had come over the Hall a greater one had risen at the Grange.

The fortunes of the Verners seemed to have changed places with that of the Seymours.

The Grange, once neglected and dilapidated, was now resplendent and flourishing.

The stables were full of horses, the house full of servants. The tide of gold which had receded from so many seemed to have rolled towards the Grange and deposited its precious sand at the Verners' feet.

No longer had the visitors to hint at parsimony or neglect. Everything about the place, from father and son to the stable backs, witnessed to the increased power and influence of the Squire of Deane Hollow.

Olive sighed as the handsomely-appointed carriage with its heavy banner cloth and furniture flashed past the window, and dropped her work in her hand.

"These people have been enemies, and yet we still call them friends. They are here often than ever. They are like vampires, that, not content with the blood of their victim, must gloat upon the completeness of their work."

Ere the thought had winged flight the door opened and Sir Edward entered.

Change here, also. Instead of the tall, upright, careless dignity and the pale, cheerful face, which proclaimed that all was well with its owner, there was a thin, meagre figure and a pale, wrinkled face, whose dignity was touching in its mournful expression of regret and pain.

With rather quicker step than usual she followed, whose love for his treasures had grown greater than ever now that all other things previous to him seemed departing, crossed the room and laid his hand upon Olive's head.

Neither spoke for a moment, then Olive, looking up quickly, said, in a low voice—

"Papa, something has happened—some fresh trouble! You look troubled." And she drew it down and pressed it to her lips.

He stooped and kissed her.

"You have been very brave, more brave than I, Olive," he said. "I think women's hearts hold more courage than men. I would have said that all this would have killed you."

"I am not so easily disposed of, dear," said Olive, with a smile.

"It is for my sake—I know it!" said Sir Edward. "I have seen the tears steal down your cheek when you thought I had left the room or was not looking. Oh, Olive, it is hard to bear for those we love! For myself all might go unpreserved, but to think that you, the pride of the county, the heiress of Dingley, should know such degradation! And worse, far worse than all, to know night and day that my folly has wrought it all!"

"Hush, hush!" breathed Olive. "What matters what happens so that we two are together? We can be happy in the poorest cottage, on the meanest fare. Let all go so that we remain to each other! Come, dear, tell me what has happened. You promised I should know all, remember?"

"The sale—the sale must come!" said Sir Edward, in a low voice.

"Well, dear, we expected it. We are prepared. And how soon?"

"Next month," replied Sir Edward. "Next month Dingley, the house of my ancestors, your inheritance, will have passed from us for ever. Oh, it is too dreadful to be borne!"

"No. It is hard, very hard, but there are worse calamities than this," said Olive. "And then, dear—what then?"

"Then—" said the baronet, and stopped. "I cannot tell. All seems mist and uncertainty. John Verner has been all the morning pointing out to me the choice of courses, but I cannot choose. It seems as if the end had come, and that all that can be done will not make the evil the better."

"At least, dear, we can go out of the way of the hard, uncertain world. Some little place will serve to shelter us. There must be some remnant of property, some rag of the old flag left to cover us," and she smiled.

"A miserable pittance of two hundred a year?" said the baronet. "It is starvation!"

"No, no," said Olive. "It is enough for a large family of poor people, and we shall only be a small one. Oh, papa, do not think I am affecting light-heartedness! I am half glad that the end has come. These last twelve months of uncertainty have been worse than death. Now comes peace—peace and rest!"

"Peace!" echoed Sir Edward, clutching her hand. "Never in this world, for me! When I pass those gates, dearest, I shall have left life behind me! You cannot tear the ivy from the oak, it breaks and bleeds and dies. And if I suffered not for myself I should suffer for you. Your sweet face, with its smile of peace and patience, would be an endless reproach, which would wound me till the day of my death, now not far off—not far off! Oh, Heaven!" he groaned, hiding his face in his hands. "What I would give if they would let me die in my own place and be buried amongst my own people!"

Alarmed by the depth of his anguish, Olive arose and drew him down to the seat on which she had sat.

"Hush, hush, darling!" she murmured.

Then tortured by the sight of his agony, she allowed one wail to escape her.

"Oh, is there no hope—no loophole of escape?"

Sir Edward's hands dropped, and he turned his white face up to hers.

"Yes," he said, with intensity. "There is one."

Olive started, and gazed at him breathless.

"A hope that we may remain—that Dingley may still be ours?"

"Yes, there is, my darling," he said.

"Impossible! who can save us?" she breathed.

Sir Edward's head drooped, and his eyes fixed themselves on the floor.

"John Verner!" he replied, in a low, concentrated voice.

Olive's heart sank; she scarcely knew why.

"John Verner!" she repeated, doubtfully.

Sir Edward nodded.

"Yes," he said, "John Verner, of the Grange, could save us."

"It is possible," said Olive slowly, and with that bitterness which is so bitter in its calm. "It is possible; he could us."

Sir Edward winced.

"No!" he said, "I ruined you, dear—no one else!"

Olive smiled sorrowfully.

"It is not so, dear," she said, "and you know it. And John Verner can save Dingley for us! Why doesn't he then? He is so base a creature as to use the name of friend and stand by in our need, with his hands, that could save us, folded in indifference! Or does the self-conceit a scoundrel like him is unable or unwilling to make?"

"It deserves a sacrifice which he is willing to make," said Sir Edward.

"Then why does he not—Ah! I see, he asks some return, some equivalent!"

Sir Edward remained silent.

Olive knelt by his side and took his hand.

"Tell me all, papa; we were to have no secrets from each other—more, were we? Come, tell me all. Who knows? I may be able to help you!"

Sir Edward raised his wan face, and looked at her young and beautiful one.

"Do not ask me, dear!" he said. "Do not ask me!"

"Tell me without," she whispered. "What is it John Verner asks as a reward for the salvation of poor Dingley?"

"He asks—youself!" said Sir Edward, with averted eyes.

"Myself!" echoed Olive, and her clasp on her father's arm tightened. "Impossible!"

"Yes, he makes your hand the reward for his sacrifice. It is a great one, for such a man of the world—it is a great one, and—I—he put it delicately—delicately. He implored me not to tell you if I thought that you had any aversion. The young man loves you—he says—"

"The young man?" said Olive. "Morgan Verner?"

"Morgan Verner," repeated Sir Edward, half to himself. "He is young, and he has loved you, he says, since the moment he first saw you. He must love you, or he would not ask me to give you to him. But it shall not be!" he broke off more hurriedly.

"No man shall rise to say I forced my darling against her will! Not to save the world would I see you the wife of a man you did not love! Why should I? A short month or two, and my day's drama will have been played out—no, no, let Dingley go!"

"It shall not go!" said Olive, in a low, broken voice. "Papa, for all your love poured out on me since the day I was born, I have done nothing. I can do something at last. I am of no value—poor, weak woman that I am. I can save Dingley!"

"You—you—"

"I am a Seymour, as you are!" she said, drawing herself up to him, and laying her head upon his breast with a mixture of tenderness and pride. "I can save the old place and I will. Tell John Verner that the price is forthcoming; that he may stretch out his strong hand and snatch the home of our ancestors from the ruin that awaits it, for I will be his son Morgan's bride!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HELPLESS as he had been all through the dreadful, disastrous months that had passed—helpless Sir Edward was still.

Olive had declared that she was ready, nay, willing to save Dingley, and John Verner was willing to make his sacrifice.

What that sacrifice exactly was, it would have been difficult to say.

There were a number of lawyers, and a multitude of deeds.

Gold passed, and bonds were given.

Sir Edward fully believed that the noble-hearted master of the Grange had paid thousands to liberate poor unfortunate Dingley, and he was proportionately grateful.

Though more cheerful, the squire looked changed and aged, and there were many who whispered that John Verner's help had come too late, and that Sir Edward would not live to enjoy his regained possessions long.

Olive's trial had yet to come; for until the deed had been drawn and executed, Morgan, the happy lover, had not put in an appearance.

John Verner said that Morgan was away in Paris on important business connected with the affairs on hand.

Certainly he was in Paris, or some part of France, but the business that had taken him there did not occupy much of his time or attention.

By day he could have been found lounging at the clubs or the Boulevards.

By night one might have found him plunged in the pleasures, and some of the vices of the gay city.

Ugly stories were ripe in London as to the doings of young Verner, but the rumour did not reach remote Dingley, and Sir Edward's time passed in happy ignorance of his intended son-in-law's real character.

At last the day arrived when Morgan was expected home.

Dinner had been served, and was in course of removal, when a servant entered and announced the arrival of Morgan Verner.

Sir Edward glanced at Olive.

She set down her dessert knife for a moment, and turned rather pale; but this sign of surprise almost instantly disappeared, and she looked up at her father with a smile.

"Tell Mr. Verner we will join him presently," said Sir Edward, then nervously he added: "Will you see him first, Olive, or shall I?"

"I will go, papa," said Olive, and she rose quietly.

Outside in the hall she paused, and pressed her hand against her heart, and could Sir Edward have seen the expression of dread, loathing, and despair, upon her pale face, he would have thrown Dingley to the dogs, and saved her.

But he was sitting with a doubtful nervousness, waiting for the moment when he should have to welcome the son of the man who had saved his heritage.

Olive opened the drawing-room door, and entered slowly.

Morgan Verner, who was lounging on a couch, rose with a smile, and came across the room.

He was dressed in the extreme of fashion, and had evidently taken great pains to make his appearance as effective as possible.

Clothes of the last Parisian cut, a hat with a faultless nap, and an exotic of the choicest in his button-hole.

But do what he would in the matter of dress and get up, his face was unalterable.

It was worse, too, than it had been, for time had considerably mottled, and given more vulgar.

There was still the shifting look in the eyes, heightened by the haggard complexion of dissipation and excess.

Olive shuddered as she held out her hand—shuddered with aversion and disgust.

"Well Olive," he said, in accents which marked their position, and betrayed the insolence of conquest. "Here I am at last! How pale you are looking! Haven't you been well?" and he kept her hand in his.

"Yes," said Olive in a low, measured voice, "quite well—and you?"

"Ois, first-rate!" he replied, his eyes shifting a little beneath the pure dignity of her beauty. "Quite well—it seems so since we saw each other. I hope you are glad to see me?"

"It is a long time," said Olive. "I am glad to see you back in England."

"And is that all?" he asked, rather wounded. "I've been looking forward to this hour for—for months past. I'm a lucky fellow to have won you, Olive! Very lucky. I'm sure we shall be very happy. I have always loved you from the first; you know that, don't you?"

Olive sank into a chair, and smiled faintly.

"But I never thought there was any chance for me. And so we are engaged, eh?"

Again Olive smiled, and Morgan's courage, which had only been at Dutchman's point, began to slacken.

"I suppose all is set right now?" he said, nervously.

"I hope so," said Olive. "Mr. Verner has been very good!"

Morgan smiled sardonically under his moustache.

"Oh, yes, the guv'nor's not a bad sort," he said, "and if he says a thing, he does it! I suppose he's settled with the creditors, he?"

"He has done something which has saved my father much agony—we should have lost Dingley

but for Mr. Verner's exertions, and—I am very grateful!"

"Oh, don't talk like that," said Morgan, awkwardly. "Of course we must help one another. And so you've been expecting me a long while?" He added, glancing at her from the corner of his eyes, with a curious, suspicious scrutiny.

"Yes, a long time—some months," said Olive. "But we know that you were busy."

"Yes, I have been busy," said Morgan, quickly. "Had a great deal to do for the guv'nor. Very tired and glad to get back, I can tell you. And so you think you can love me, can you, Olive?" he ventured, seriously.

"I will try!" said Olive, very white and stone-like.

"Oh, you mustn't only try!" remonstrated Morgan, rather chafed and nettled by her coldness and candour. "You must, you know, as we're going to be married. I don't believe in love after marriage, do you?"

Olive's face came a wintry smile of mockery. Love after marriage!

No, but hate, loathing, detestation; she could understand those coming with due consequences in their train.

"I cannot say," she said. "It may."

"Marriage is a good thing," said Morgan, sucking the dainty handle of his walking stick. "And I don't think you can have it too soon. When do you think we can be married?"

Olive's heart leapt, and seemed to stand still.

"When?" she repeated. "Oh, not yet—not yet—not for some time!"

"Oh, but that was part of the bargain, you know."

And then he stopped, wishing that he had bitten his tongue out.

Olive turned on him with a cold smile, which made him tremble.

"Was it a part of the bargain?" she said. "I think not; if it was, then it must be kept."

"You know what I mean by bargain," he stammered. "You ladies are so quick to take a man up. Of course there's no bargain."

"Yes," interrupted Olive, in a low voice. "Your father promised that he would save Dingley—would make a great sacrifice, if I would promise to—he—your—wife. I agreed, and that was a bargain. A bargain which I am ready to keep. But there was nothing said about the marriage taking place at once."

"Of course there wasn't, but—but—you know I must be anxious. Look what time I've loved you—an awful long time, by Jove! Do you remember the fancy ball?"

A spasm of pain passed over Olive's face.

Did she remember it?

Should she ever forget it?

That night a good, noble-hearted man had asked her to be his wife, and she had refused.

Refused, because she believed that she loved a man, who though so greatly below her in position, was more than her equal in mind and soul.

Now that man had turned out false and base, and she was pledged to marry the heap of baseness beside her.

Oh, would it not have been better to have said yes that night to Lord Craven, and found shelter and protection for her father and herself in a honest man's love!

She could at least have respected, if not loved Lord Craven; but this man she detested and despised!

"I shan't forget that night in a hurry," said Morgan, happily unconscious of the thoughts which had floated through his retroted brain. "I was very near popping the question, that night, Olive. Would you have had me?"

"No, I think not," said Olive, in a broken voice.

"I'm sure you're not well!" he said, taking her hand, and fondling it between his. "You've been harassing and fretting after me, of course. I couldn't help it. Business is business, and there's no getting away from it. But don't fret any more. I've come back now, and I mean to stay. Of course I must run up to London now and then." He put in, with a suspicious sharpness, "but I mean to stay until we are married, and then settle down quite the respectable old style. Won't that be nice, eh, Olive?"

She could not speak, but smiled, and then slowly drawing her hand away, rose.

"I will go and tell Sir Edward that you are here," she said.

Morgan rose and caught her hand.

"Don't go like that," he said, evidently intending to embrace her, but Olive glided from him, and opened the door.

An ugly scowl settled upon Morgan's face as the door closed.

"Proud fiend!" he muttered. "I bet I'll show her I'm master. Does she think I'm going to be

treated like this, after all we've done for 'em. They'd have been beggars if the guv'nor hadn't worked the oracle, and now she receives me as if I was a nobody. All right, my fine miss! I'll teach you to be a little more civil to your future husband!"

The door opened again, and Sir Edward entered.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

DYEING WITH ARTIFICIAL ALIZARIN.—Forster proposes to add a fatty acid to the colour, in order to produce upon cotton with artificial alizarin a red resembling Turkey red. He mordants with alumina, and dyes in alizarin bath containing soap, neutralized with sulphuric acid. The mixture of alizarin and fatty acid, which separates out in fine flakes, dyes the tissues readily, and gives bright and solid colours—red, rose, and purple.

The Belfast ginger ale, which has for the last few summers become quite a popular beverage, may be made as follows: Powdered double refined sugar, 16 ozs.; bicarbonate of soda, 3½ ozs.; citric acid, 4½ ozs.; concentrated essence of ginger 1½ ozs.; essence of cayenne 4 drachms; essence of lemon, 40 drops. The soda, acid, and sugar must be carefully dried separately, at a temperature not exceeding 120°; and the sugar before drying must be thoroughly incorporated with the essences, to which a small quantity of caramel as colouring may be added. This forms a powder, a dessert-spoonful of which will make a tumblerful of the drink.

CLEANING SILK.—The following mode of cleaning silk garments has been successfully tested. The garment must first be ripped and dusted. Have a large flat board; over it spread an old sheet. Take half a cup of gall, half a cup ammonia, and half a pint tepid soft water. Sponge the silk with this on both sides, especially the soiled spots. Having finished sponging, roll it on a round stick like a broom handle, being careful not to have any wrinkles. Silk thus washed, and thoroughly dried, needs no ironing and has a lustre like new silk. Not only silk but merino, bardge, or any woolen goods, may be thus treated with the best results.

AN AMERICAN INVENTION.—An American invention has been patented in London for vessels, especially steamers, at sea as night. The action of the rudder is made to work the lights, so as to indicate how the helm is put. When the officer of the "watch" directs the man who steers to starboard his helm, the lights are turned by the movement of the wheel; and when the ship resumes her straight course the lights indicate that she is steering in a direct line. Thus a vessel ahead can learn better than the officer of the "watch" what the quartermaster actually has done with the wheel, and as the lights change before the vessel feels the influence, those ahead know the course the ship is about to take. The same invention, unless we mistake, has also increased by a simple process the distance at which a green light is visible. A white light may be observed for twenty miles, red only four, while a green has hitherto been limited to a mile and a half. The green appears to absorb or neutralize the rays, and the object is to check that action as far as possible; in which this inventor has succeeded so as to make the green light visible as far as the red, or some four miles.

BASIL RIVINGTON'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PERCY HARDCOURT.—Percy Harcourt was distinguished for his love of truth; in all his life he had never uttered a falsehood, but if he had ever been tempted to deceit, he was tempted then; Duke's eyes were fixed on him with a keen, searching look, and so he answered bravely:

"I'm afraid so. Oh, Duke, doesn't it seem hard, you so young, so rich in all that makes life pleasant?"

Duke answered by another question.

"Tell me, am I dying?"

"The doctors say so. Oh, Duke, why will you make me say it? your father does not know it yet, and I am sure I ought not to have told you."

"Yes, you ought; it was my fault, not yours, I made you tell me."

"Aren't you afraid, Duke?"

The question was asked with a great deal of hesitation. Percy Harcourt was no coward, he had plenty of courage for the affairs of this life; but he

was dimly conscious that if it was he lying there, with all the good things of this world slipping from his grasp, and nothing to look forward to but a dread, unknown hereafter, he should be very far from easy in his mind, very far from peaceful.

Duke looked up with that old winning smile in his beautiful eyes.

"No, I don't think so. Life is very fair, and I used to think it would be very hard to leave it, but these last months those thoughts have gone, and I know that all is well."

Yes, that disappointment had been for the best. If Ida Colville had accepted his love Duke would have had human ties to bind him closer to this world, now he was free, and in those last few months, as he told Percy, he had been gradually learning to think less of earth and more of Heaven, so that now the great change was approaching he could meet it without fear, armed with a strength not his own, but borrowed from a higher source.

Duke stayed at Rivington House, the other guests had fled at the sound of danger, but he lingered, though unconscious whether his presence were welcome to his host; that doubt was soon to be set at rest, for when he left Duke and met Mr. Rivington in the breakfast-room, the latter wrung his hand, and said heartily :

" You were my poor boy's friend, don't leave us till he's better."

" I will stay gladly while you wish it."

Had any one told Percy Harcourt he would willingly stay where the shadow of death was fast approaching, he would not have believed them, but his friendship for Duke was no common one, and so he stayed.

By-and-by the doctor came—not Mr. Gilson, who had sat up through the night and hurried home at the first gleam of morning light, to snatch an hour or two's well-earned repose before commencing the duties of another day—but the physician. This time he attempted no cheering with fallacious hopes, he told Squire Rivington freely that he believed his son to be at the point of death. Marmaduke heard him as one stunned, and the mother felt a sharp pang of reproach, that while her son was well and strong she had not been kinder, more tender—in a word that she had not shown him how she loved him. Something of this she was thinking later on that day, when the stir of the doctor's visit was over, and all was quiet and still in the room, which they were told was soon to be visited by the angel of death; and in her agony of grief the great tear-drops rolled slowly down her cheeks till Duke saw them, and then she dried them hastily.

He put out his hand. They were mother and son. The bond between them had not been as strong and sacred as it sometimes is, but it was there, and both felt at that moment the strength of their mutual affection more than they had ever done before.

" Do you know you are very ill, Duke?"

" That I am dying," unconsciously changing her question. " Yes, mother."

" And you talk of it so calmly, so peacefully," cried his mother, almost as though she would rather he had not so talked of it. " Oh, Duke, you can never have loved us, to be so ready to leave us."

" I do love you, warmly."

" You have had no trouble," she continued, reproachfully, " to make life seem distasteful."

" I will tell you now what in health would never have passed my lips. I have had trouble, perhaps one of the heaviest that can come to a young man just setting out in life. I loved Ida Colville; loved her with such an intensity that life seemed worthless without her."

Hard and cold as she seemed, Elizabeth Rivington had a heart; she felt an interest in the romance for the first time confided to her—a deep pity for the suffering Duke had borne so patiently, unnoticed, sympathised with her, his mother.

" Oh, Duke; and I have spoken against her, but did not mean it, and I could not guess."

" No, you could not guess."

" Does she know it?"

" What?"

" All she was to you."

" I told her; I would have sacrificed all for her sake."

" Surely she did not refuse you?"

" She did; she said she had no love to give me, and that without that she would never be any man's wife."

Mrs. Rivington felt a momentary glow of admiration for the girl's heroism in choosing a life of poverty rather than accepting riches from one she did not love.

" She is a true woman; but oh, Duke, it is all my fault. Perhaps if I had been different towards her she would not have said no."

" It is too late to think of that, mother."

" Too late! oh, how bitterly those words sound to us; is there one amongst us, I wonder, who in the course of a life-time has not heard their knell ring at least once, solemnly in his ears, too late? Aye, it was too late for any conduct of Mrs. Rivington's to change the future for her son. He must sink into an early grave, but there was nothing to prevent her showing kindness to the girl he had loved; and as Ida's sweet, sad face rose up in memory's clear vision, she felt that could Duke have been restored, she would cheerfully, very joyously, have witnessed such a marriage.

" Don't fret about it, mother; I have nearly got over it now. Depend upon it, what is, is best, only I should like to see her once again."

Mrs. Rivington had often declaimed against Ida; often suspected her of trying to catch her son. She had even declared to the squire, that with her consent, Miss Colville should never cross their threshold; but all was different now.

" Do you know where she is; shall I write and ask her?"

" Would you be kind to her, mother? Ida is so tender, so sensitive."

" Can you doubt me, Duke?"

" No; and oh, I think she would come now, just to say 'Good-bye.' Yes, write and ask her."

Feeble as he was, he dictated the address when the note was finished: it was simple, very simple, and very different to any previous production of Elizabeth Rivington's. She told of her son's illness, touched on the subject of his deep love for Miss Colville, and begged that though she knew his wooing had been unsuccessful, Ida would not refuse to come to them, to gratify what seemed to be Duke's only wish, to see her once again, and then there was a postscript, which Duke did not see, which cost his mother's pride a bitter sacrifice to write, since it was an entreaty for pardon for past slights and unkindness.

" She will have it to-morrow, Duke," when the note was on its way to the post, " she might be here in the afternoon."

He was almost worn out by so much talking and excitement, his eyes were half closed, as though he were sinking into sleep. Softly he whispered:

" I hope she will be in time, mother, in time for me."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The morning after Mrs. Rivington had penned that letter of contrition, Ida Colville stood at a window of her new home, carelessly watching the postman, as he passed swiftly on his round. The change had already made itself seen in her appearance, her cheeks were growing round, her colour had returned. Altogether she looked more like Basil Rivington's sunbeam than she had done as the fair northern linnet. The braids she had worn since her sojourn in London were gone, and the glittering hair was dressed in its old low curl, which as well as the light dress the mildness of the season still permitted of her wearing, gave to their owner a peculiar youthful appearance. It was a very simple dress, only pretty washing cambric, and its colour was blue, for neither he nor Mrs. Chub had put on mourning for little Jackie they could not bear black in memory of a child; who in his little life had brought them so much sunshine.

Mrs. Chub, who was pouring out the tea, called on Ida to come to breakfast. She had just turned to obey the summons, when the loud rat-tat proclaimed that this morning someone in their household was to be favoured with a letter. A moment more, and the servant handed Miss Colville an envelope, bearing the crest of the Rivingtons.

She read the note to its end, and then her blue eyes filled with tears, tears such as must come to any true woman on hearing that the man who has given her all his love, lies near to death, and Duke was dear to Ida. Though she would not be his wife, she loved him, warmly, as a friend and brother. The self-command these last few months had been teaching did not fail her now; drying her tears she told Mrs. Chub something of her sorrow, not much, but yet sufficient to make the good woman declare that she must set off for Rivington that very day. Breakfast was hurried over, a cab was called.

Calm and collected, Ida went through everything. She put up a few necessaries for herself, gave Susan many a charge to take care of Mrs. Chub during her absence.

Not till she was alone in the railway-carriage, and the figure of the kindly widow, as she stood on the platform—waving a last adieu—had quite receded from her sight, did Ida quite realise the import of the tidings that had reached her so suddenly. Not till then did she realise that Duke, whom she had

last seen in the pride of strength, was dying, aye, dying!

For well enough did Miss Colville know that nothing but the fear of his immediate danger could have induced his mother to humble her pride sufficiently to sue for forgiveness.

A carriage was in waiting at the tiny station which was the nearest stopping point to Rivington. The coachman touched his hat respectfully, he had served Basil Rivington long and faithfully, he had not forgotten his adopted daughter; the footman held open the door. Soon Ida had seated herself and the fine horses commenced their homeward journey, not before she had made anxious inquiry for Duke, and received the sad answer.

" A little weaker."

Only one little week before, if anyone had told Ida she would return to Rivington House, she would have said it was impossible for her ever to revisit it, it was too full of painful memories; but now the greater evil had swallowed up the less. So full of anxiety was she for the man who had given her his love, that the old familiar streets awoke little or no regret, and only one sigh escaped her when the carriage stopped beneath the portico.

She had no cause to complain of her reception; had she been still their mistress, the servants could hardly have shown her more respect; one led the way to the drawing-room, another went to summon Mrs. Rivington.

Grief makes mighty changes; all the jealousy and resentment had died out of Elizabeth's heart; she almost yearned to see the girl her boy had loved, whom he seemed to wish for more than all else beside.

She went straight up to her guest, and with outstretched hands drew her close, and kissed her with a warmth she had never manifested in other days; she looked with a keen eagerness at the beautiful face and confessed it was not strange that Duke had yielded to its charm.

" It is very good of you to come."

" I could not have remained away after your letter."

" He is dying," breathed the mother, " his only wish has been to see you once again. Oh, Ida!" and she almost broke down, " how different it all might have been if I had been gentler, if he had married you."

Ida's tears were flowing; drying them quickly, she asked:

" When shall I see him?"

" Now, he expects you."

Herself she removed her guest's bonnet and heavy travelling cloak, she smoothed the sunny hair with no ungentle touch, then she took Ida's hand and led her through the winding corridors, till they came to the room—Duke's room.

Percy Harcourt, who had been sitting with his friend, rose at the sound of footsteps. As Mrs. Rivington entered he caught one glimpse of her companion, and that filled him with intense surprise, for the beautiful face he had first seen in Mr. Caution's office was before him.

The recognition was mutual. Ida blushed to a hot crimson, then he passed out, and she became conscious of only one, the one who lay so calmly waiting for the end.

Mrs. Rivington led her up to him, and a faint smile came at seeing them approach together, his mother and the girl he had wished to make his wife.

" Ida."

It was all he said, but he stretched out his hand and took one of hers in it, the waiting, expectant look passed from his face, as he murmured:

" I can die happy now!"

" On, Duke!" sighed Ida, forgetful of all else, save that he was noble and had loved her; " must you die, is there no hope?"

" None, my darling; you must not grieve for me. Perhaps, if I had lived on a few years longer I might not leave the world so readily."

She answered not, but the heavy tears dropped from her blue eyes and fell upon the hand in which her own was clasped.

" Little Ida," fondly, wistfully, " you must not sorrow so. See how much I have to make me happy—all that love can bring, and my parents—and you."

He dwelt on the last word with lingering tenderness.

She could only say, " I am so sorry!" but it was true, for it came from the very depths of her full heart.

" It is best so, dear one. You never loved me, and if I live I must have seen you drift away, and now I can think of you as all my own."

His eyes were bent on her with an expression of intense affection, and Ida fell to wondering why such a heart had been permitted to pour out its wealth of love in vain.

Mrs. Rivington, fearing the excitement was too much for the sufferer, prepared to leave the room.
"Good-bye," she murmured, "good-bye, Duke."
Reluctantly he relinquished her hand.
"May you be happy, Ida, in all! Heaven bless you, my own love. Good-bye for ever!"

(To be Continued.)

INTERNATIONAL PREJUDICES.

ENGLISHMEN, indeed, boast themselves to be grumbler by profession. We confess, it is said, and even exaggerate, our own shortcomings. I have known a sincerely religious person rather confounded by the discovery that somebody had taken in downright earnest his confession that he was a miserable sinner. He was forced to explain with some awkwardness that though, on proper occasions, he admitted the utter villainy of his heart, yet, as a matter of fact, he was not more in the habit of breaking the Ten Commandments than his most respectable neighbours. The admission that they do things better in France means just as much or as little as this confession of the ordinary Pharisee.

Nations differ widely in their mode of expressing their self-satisfaction, but hardly in the degree of complacency. A German, perhaps, is the most priggish in his consciousness of merit. He expounds his theory of world-history with the airs of a professor, and lays down his superiority to all mankind as the latest discovery of scientific thought. French vanity is the most childlike, and, therefore, at once the least offensive and the most extravagant.

American brag is often the noisiest; but it has a certain frankness which is not without its attraction. If you meet an English and an American snob together in a picture-gallery, they may be equally indifferent to the fine arts; but the American will frankly confess that he never heard of Raphael before, and disdains what he now sees; whereas your true Briton puts on a shoebox affectation of good taste, and hopes that you will mistake his stupidity for pride. If English patriotism is not pedantic, nor vain, nor bombastic, it has a tinge of vulgarity which is almost peculiar to itself, and can therefore be more offensively vulgar than that of any other race. There is, however, little to choose in reality between the varying manifestations of the feeling.

A profound conviction that everyone is a barbarian who does not wear clothes of our pattern is common to all mankind. Whether it takes this or that colouring, whether it is frank or reserved, directly or indirectly, boastful, is a secondary consideration. And, moreover, the reason is obvious enough; namely, that the conviction does not, properly speaking, represent any intellectual conviction whatever, but is simply the reverse side of the universal instinct of self-satisfaction. When Johnson said, "foreigners are fools," he expressed a belief as universal that the belief that two and two make four.

THE DIAMOND BRACELET.

CHAPTER I.

IT was in May, 1857.

In a bungalow, in the hill region of Hindostan, an English woman, exhausted from a long course of fever, lay at the point of death.

She was Mrs. Agnes Elliot, wife of Captain Nugent Elliot, of Her Majesty's army, young and handsome, the idol of her husband's heart.

A Hindoo nurse watched beside her with anxious eyes, waving a fan gently, and noting the faintest change in the thin, white face and drawn features of her mistress.

Captain Elliot was pacing the wide, thatch-roofed verandah just without, his head bowed upon his breast, an agonised look upon his face.

A few English soldiers lounged under the trees near at hand.

A little child, with fair hair waving over her shoulders, and a fair little face, as lovely as a poet's vision—Captain Elliot's only child—reclined upon a bamboo settle in the coolest corner of the verandah, fast asleep.

A few turbaned Sepoys were visible in the background.

Captain Elliot's soul was torn with conflicting emotions.

He had obtained leave of absence from his command for a week, although with great difficulty, that he might watch beside his wife, who had been sent up to the hills under escort of soldiers, in the earliest stage of her illness.

Already the shadow of the coming horror darkened the land.

His leave of absence would expire in two days' time.

Duty and honour called him to his post of command.

Could he leave his wife? Would she live two days longer?

Was she not even now lying in the very shadow of death?

"Oh, Heaven, pity us!" he muttered, his stern features working. "Spare her to me—my poor wife! Spare her!"

A man came out upon the verandah through one of the open windows of the dwelling.

He was Thomas Bathurst, the cousin of Captain Elliot, a man with heavy features and dark complexion, not tall, but clumsily-built, low-browed, and with a sinister visage.

He was as unlike the captain as night is unlike the day, yet the two were friends in outward seeming.

The friendship was sincere on the part of Captain Elliot, who was one of the most generous and unsuspecting of men, as Bathurst was one of the most willing and scheming.

Captain Elliot was rich; Bathurst was poor.

They had been brought up together in England, and had come to India together, one in the army, and the other in the civil service.

There had been but one point of difference between them in all their lives.

Both had loved the same woman, but she had rejected Bathurst to marry Elliot.

Bathurst believed that his rival had won her by means of his wealth.

The captain had long since forgotten his cousin's unfavoured suit; but Bathurst had not forgotten it. He was a man who never forgot a slight.

And now the woman who had been loved by them both, with all the passion of their ardent souls, lay ill in a room close at hand—ill unto death.

"How is she now, Nugent?" asked Bathurst, in a low voice. "Is there no change?"

"None," answered Captain Elliot, despairingly. "She lies in the same stupor; the fever shows no signs of abatement. There is nothing more that can be done for her."

"Poor Agnes!" sighed Bathurst. "She has been ill many weeks now. Her reserve of strength must have been exhausted long before this. Yet she may last a week longer. Your leave expires two days hence. What shall you do if she should still be living when your time comes to depart?"

"Heaven knows!"

"If we had only known how matters would turn out, you would never have sent your wife and child to this lonely spot," said Bathurst, in a lower tone, glancing about him cautiously. "There have been disturbances at Berhampoor and Ambala, and blood has been shed at Barrackpoor and Meerut. This disaffection among the Sepoy soldiers promises to be something more than child's play. In my opinion, there is a concerted movement throughout the country among the Sepoys. I have seen looks on the faces of those copper rascals out yonder that bodes no good to us, Nugent. If Agnes could possibly be moved, I should urge you to take her to the station."

"Too late! It is too late!"

"That servant of yours, Topee, is, in my opinion, as big a scoundrel as any Sepoy of them all," said Bathurst. "I have seen him look at you during the last few days with a glare of absolute hatred in his eyes. He means to work you some harm if he gets the chance, mark my words!"

Captain Elliot listened for some sound from the sick chamber, too utterly agonised to heed his cousin's speech.

"Life is uncertain," continued Bathurst, after a pause, during which he studied the faces of the native soldiers on the lawn. "If you escape all harm, Nugent, and get safely back to England, promise me that you will look after my boy, who is in his grandmother's care. Poor little fellow! His mother is dead, he is poor, and Heaven knows what will become of him if I am taken from him!"

Captain Elliot gave the required promise, scarcely knowing, in his distraction, what he said.

After Bathurst's rejection by the lady whom his cousin had married, the former had also married, but his wife had died within a year, leaving a child, the son above alluded to.

"Your girl is two years younger than my boy," said Bathurst, thoughtfully, his gaze settling upon

the sleeping child, "and she is seven years old. If anything happens to you, you may depend upon me to look after her. Poor little Kate! Ah! what's that? A courier with dispatches!"

The captain had been on the point of entering his wife's chamber, but he halted as a horseman, a Sepoy soldier, came riding swiftly towards the bungalow, advancing to the very edge of the verandah.

Bathurst's surmise was correct. The newcomer was a courier, with dispatches from Captain Elliot's commanding officer.

Bathurst seized the missive, and handed it to his cousin.

"Read it," said the young officer, huskily. "I cannot."

Bathurst tore open the dispatch, and read it hastily, changing colour.

The courier had retired. Bathurst exclaimed, exultingly:

"My fears are confirmed, Nugent. Your colonel writes that there has been a terrible massacre at Meerut, and another at Delhi. Dissatisfaction has spread throughout the ranks of the Sepoys. More uprisings are expected with every day and hour, and you are ordered to return to your station at Shahjehanpoor, with the soldiers who have served as your escort, immediately upon the receipt of this dispatch, without one moment's unnecessary delay. And the colonel adds that no considerations of a private or personal interest can have weight with a true soldier in a time like this."

Captain Elliot stood still, as if turned to stone.

"The gist of the matter is," commented Bathurst, "that if you delay to obey this summons you will probably be dismissed the army for cowardice, or cashiered for disobedience to orders. On the one hand, the agony of leaving your wife in her last extremity; on the other, disgrace and a blighted life."

Captain Elliot started from his statue-like attitude as if stung, and without a word passed into his wife's chamber.

He stood by her bed-side, and gazed with burning eyes upon the pale, thin face, white as the pillow which it pressed.

Her eyes, the sweet, tender eyes that had always looked love into his, were closed.

The fever-flush had departed.

How ghastly white she was! How deathly still!

The lace-frilled gown lay silent on her breast.

The hands looked as though sculptured from marble.

Life seemed to have deserted its frail citadel. Was she dead?

A wild and awful terror seized upon him. He felt her pulse.

It fluttered feebly.

The eyelids flickered slightly, and then all was still again.

He knelt beside her; he called upon her in anguished tones to awaken, to speak to him. He called her by the pet names she had loved, but she took no heed.

He kissed her; he pressed her to his bosom, and his terror was worse than death.

The nurse felt her mistress's pulse, and then her wild wail rang out on the air.

Bathurst came hurrying in, and bent over the bed, his countenance growing livid.

"She is dead!" he said. "Nugent, don't give way like this! Think of your little motherless child! She has only you now!"

He hurried out, returning with the little girl half awake in his arms.

He placed her on her father's knee, and withdrew, leaving them alone with their maddening grief.

As he had intimated, Bathurst was seriously alarmed at the manner and attitude of the Sepoys at the bungalow.

Captain Elliot's company was English, but certain Sepoy soldiers had been detailed to attend him in the capacity of servants.

The man Topee was one of these.

The Sepoys were too few in number, as compared to the white soldiers, to venture an uprising, but any act of treachery might be feared from them.

"Agnes's death was opportune," thought Bathurst, with a keen pang of regret for the untimely loss of the woman he had vainly loved. "We could not have taken her—we could not have left her. And now we must be off."

He hurried forth, giving the soldiers orders to prepare for immediate departure.

He returned to the dwelling, sought out little Kate's ayah, and ordered a valise to be packed with the child's clothes upon the instant.

He packed Mrs. Elliot's jewel-case with his own hands, and ordered hampers of provisions to be made ready.

While Captain Elliot sat stupefied with despair and anguish, and little Kate cried bitterly, and the nurse uttered her monotonous wails, Bathurst made every preparation for departure, forgetting nothing.

An hour later, when the troop of soldiers were in their saddles, and drawn up before the bungalow, Bathurst entered the shadowy room where his cousin still sat, dry-eyed and stony, haggard and hopeless, looking aged ten years since the early morning.

"Come, Nugent," he said, gently. "Agnes is dead. You can do no good by remaining here longer. We must go."

Captain Elliot did not seem to hear.

"Nugent," cried his cousin, "your wife is dead, but your country lives, and has demands upon you which not even your grief can dissipate. Remember, you are a soldier. Will you stay here pining by a woman's body while your sword is wanted at your post?"

The young officer lifted his head, and regarded his cousin with haggard and despairing eyes.

"Your soldiers are in their saddles," said Bathurst, "Your horse is waiting."

The captain looked upon the still, white face and motionless figure upon the bed.

"Who will bury her?" he asked.

The Hindoo nurse had loved her young mistress with a rare devotion.

No disaffection among the Sepoys could have power to stir her faithful heart from its allegiance to the gentle young mistress who had nursed her in sickness, and always displayed towards her the utmost kindness and consideration.

She heard the officer's question, and answered quickly:

"I will bury her. Leave her to me. I will dress her with my own hands for the grave. I will heap flowers on her breast! I will see that her grave is secure. Leave her to me!"

"Yes, leave her to Rannelee!" cried Bathurst. "You cannot doubt Rannelee's devotion. It is only the empty casket lies there, Nugent. Why cling to it? Your duty as a soldier constrains you to depart. Come!"

The captain rose up, and motioned his cousin and the nurse to withdraw.

Then, in the shadowy stillness, he and his child took their leave of their loved one.

A little later he staggered forth upon the verandah with his child in his arms.

He motioned Rannelee to return to the room, he had quitted.

Bathurst placed his hat, around which was wound the strip of linen known as a puggaree, upon his head, and brought the child's hat also.

Then the captain silently mounted his horse, keeping possession still of his child.

The ayah was mounted, also, and Bathurst sprang into the saddle.

The captain, in a hoarse voice, gave the word of command, and the little cavalcade moved away from the bungalow at a slow trot.

They had gone but a few rods when Topee, the Sepoy servant of Elliot, who had lingered behind the rest upon some purpose of plunder, leaped into the saddle, and rode after them.

The captain scarcely spoke throughout that day.

There was a look in his eyes that told Bathurst that his mind had nearly given way under the shock he had received.

It might have quite given way but for his child. She scarcely quitted his arms throughout the day.

Her wee face, tender and soft, and beautiful as a baby seraph's, lay on his desolate breast. Her eyes, grave and sorrowful, looked lovingly up into his. It was wonderful to see how she repressed her own childish grief that she might minister to him; how she coaxed him to eat at their halts, when he loathed the sight of food.

How, little by little, she won him to calmness, and to thoughts of his duty as a soldier.

At night they halted in a little open plain, and Kate slept in her father's arms, but he did not close his eyes the night through.

He thought of his lost young wife as already in her lonely grave among the hills, and his soul sickened at the thought of the days to come when she would not be with him, or the barren life stretching out before him in a vast and dreary waste, never more to be illumined by the smile of the sweet young wife whose star of life had so early set for ever.

Raising himself on his elbow, he looked upon the face of his little child with tender yearning.

For her sake he must live, and bear his burden bravely to the end.

She had bravely put aside her own grief to comfort him.

Should he be less brave and unselfish?

When morning came his face looked worn and old, and was still hopeless in its anguish. But he was full of a new solicitude for his child's welfare, and talked with her and with Bathurst, who was anxious in his attentions.

In packing up Mrs. Elliot's jewel-case, one or two articles had been overlooked.

Bathurst, at the last moment, had seen upon the dressing-bureau of the sick-chamber a gold necklace, with pendant attached, and a wide bracelet set with precious stones.

He had thrust these into his pockets, and he found an opportunity, upon this morning, to clasp the necklace around little Kate's neck, hiding it within her dress, and to clasp the bracelet upon her small arm, above the elbow.

"They will be safer with you than with me, little one," he said, "and I can't place them in your papa's care just yet, you know. Guard them carefully. They are worth a great deal of money, but are worth most to you from having belonged to your mother. In the locket are pictures of both your father and your mother. It was his wedding-gift to her, and she prized it above all her other jewels."

That act of giving to the child her mother's jewels, simple and natural as it was, was destined to change the whole course of Katharine Elliot's life, and of certain other lives, also.

But for it, agonies unspeakable would have been spared to hearts already burdened almost beyond endurance.

But for it, the strange narrative we are about to unfold to the reader could never have been written.

The child returned to her father with her treasure hidden under her garments.

The troop resumed its march under the broiling sun, through the fierce heat.

They threaded a jungle and traversed a plain during the day, with little incident to mark their route.

At evening they halted in a palm-grove, beside a running stream, and made their camp.

The child had been with her father all day. Now he noticed how grave and pale she was, with eyes filled with a sorrow far beyond her years, and he bade her run under the trees and gather flowers, of which she had always been very fond.

She obeyed him. But she had no delight now in her former favourites, and she plucked a few blossoms listlessly, and wandered down to the brook, scattering the bright petals upon the waters.

She was standing there when Topee, her father's valet, came down to the brook also, bent upon some errand.

His coming startled her from her childish reverie, and she let fall her flowers.

Stooping to pick them up, the bracelet under her sleeve, upon her upper arm, dropped to her wrist, and was plainly revealed to the Sepoy. His serpent eyes glittered.

He was a tall, thin, sinewy fellow, with thick, tawny black locks, a cruel mouth, and a subdued ferocity of expression that hinted at the devilish nature under his sinister exterior.

Mrs. Elliot had never liked him, but he had been recommended to the captain by another officer of his regiment, whom Topee had served, and Elliot had often said that the native soldiers were all alike, and that Topee differed in no wise from his fellows. Consequently, he had retained him in his service.

"Pretty jewel, little missy," he said, in a wheedling tone, his gaze fixed upon the ornament. "Let Topee see."

LETTERS FROM AN AMERICAN ABROAD.

(No. L.)

SPEAKING the same language reading the same books, adhering to the same general principles, the English people yet differ widely from the Americans in their every-day works and ways. You need only go to the mother country to be convinced that her children across the Atlantic have not "taken after" her in the details of their daily life. You are too tired to think much about it when you reach Liverpool. Between the British officer of customs and men of the land you left behind you there is a pleasing contrast. Your British friend only asks you, with a candid air, whether you have any spirits or tobacco in your luggage. You smile as you tell him that you neither drink nor smoke; and he smiles in response. He opens one of your trunks, by way of form; looks approvingly at a pretty neck-tie; bestows a glance of mild wonder on a curling-stick; and marks your traps as "passed." The hotel

hackmen do not pounce on you as they do at home; but in some gentle manner they contrive to make you feel that you are an expected guest, and they are the waiting friends who sympathise in the pains and perils of the ocean from which you have just escaped, and wish to make you forget them as speedily as possible. Before you know it you are in a comfortable room, at a comfortable hotel; and on this your first night on shore your sleep is sweet.

Next morning you are off by train for London. They weigh your baggage with a moral exactness. They allow you only sixty-six pounds free, and that is a mere beginning. You had never guessed how much trunks could weigh before. You pay a penny a pound for the extra weight, which sounds but little; yet your effects cost you seven or eight dollars for transportation, and you left all your comfortable old boots, and the books, and the pictures you longed to take behind you in America. You begin to wonder whether it were not cheaper to travel with only a toothbrush, and thus distract everything else you need, at every stopping place. The cars contain neither stove nor steam-pipe, and are warmed only by cans of hot water at your door. Fortified by these, and with railway rugs across our knees, we did not freeze, though England is cold enough in February. Think of rashing on at the rate of sixty or seventy miles an hour, through an open country which you have never seen before! You catch bewildering glimpses of all sorts of things as you are swept by them—starlit-coated hunting-parties, flapping wind-mills, cathedrals, everything you don't see at home.

At last you reach London. "Ave a four-wheeler, ma'am?" the guard—that is to say the conductor—asks, as he unlocks the door of the compartment into which you have been securely fastened. You feel meek and helpless, and nod your acquiescence. You discover that a four-wheeler is a hansom, and a very ugly, battered-looking, disreputable one at that. You are hurried into it, and then commences the surprising process of lifting your "boxes" (all trunks are boxes in England) on top of it, over your head. The man puts them up as if they were playthings—how could these boxes have weighed so much at Liverpool?—and you scuttle off toward your hotel. The cab-driver does not meet you. Your hotel is as different as it well can be from a hotel at home. There is an air of quiet respectability about it. In place of the hotel clerk, that magnificent creature of the diamond studs, and the crushing haughty manners, you find, in an office of an English hotel, neat, civil-spoken young women, who listen respectfully to your wishes, and do not give you a room as if they were bestowing alms on an unfortunate beggar. You want to go up on the elevator, and look about for it. "Here is the lift," says a waiter at your elbow. They believe in a simple physiology in England—an elevator is a "lift"—abbreviates a "sheet of drawers"; in short, a "spade" is a "spade." Your chamber is clean and comfortable; but it lacks a good many things which seem to us Americans among the necessities of life. There are no furnace registers; you warm your toes and frosts your back at the open coal fire. Moreover, there is no rocking-chair, in which you might rock yourself into forgetfulness of your fatigue, and soothe your passing sorrows into placid content. But your bed is soft, and your sheets are spotless. Your neat chamber-maid is civil. She brings you hot water and towels with an air of thoughtful consideration of your comfort. She draws your curtains, and pokes your fire, and vanishes noiselessly.

You find London cooking good, but simple. The Americans around you at breakfast deplore the hot biscuits of America, and pine for their acorn-cooked buckwheat cakes; but you get instead such buttered toast as you never dreamed of at home, and are satisfied.

It is in a hansom cab that you sally forth to see London, the morning after your arrival. You have read of hansom all your life, but your wildest imagination never pictured so quaint a vehicle. The driver sits on a lofty seat behind—a sweet little cherub perched up aloft—and drives over your head. A sort of wooden boot folds over your lap; and besides there is a dasher which protects you from the heels and tail of the cab horse, who is your very near neighbour. On this dasher advertisements are usually paraded in great white letters—advertisements of all sorts of things. The London cabmen are a race set apart, a peculiar people. A singular vindictiveness toward foot passengers seems to possess them. They go tearing down the street with a sort of diabolical malignity. To cross it in front of them is as much as your life is worth. They are civil enough to their own patrons, but unless you take a cab you have no rights which Cabbie is bound to respect.

But after all there is no way in which to see London sights so well as by means of a hansom. During the week we passed there I should hesitate to say how much our cab fare cost. And yet the

things are cheap—about sixty cents an hour; but then there are a good many hours in the day. Driving through the streets, we surveyed at leisure the manners and costumes of the Londoners. How did we always know they were Londoners, and not mere sojourners like ourselves? Ah, there is no mistaking an Englishman. In the first place there is the umbrella. To be sure, it did not rain once while we were in London, but the Londoner regards the most cloudless sky as an enemy to be distrusted, and never stir without that weapon of defense, his umbrella. The men brandish theirs like war-clubs; the women as their nature is, carry theirs less defiantly, but neither man nor woman ever goes out unarmed.

The whole get-up of the women evinces their distrust of the weather. They wear quilted petticoats, very short, and above them they gather up their long dresses in an inconceivable dowdy way. Said a wicked American girl: "They dig holes in the sand with the hollows of their feet," and certainly such broad, flat feet as those of the English pedestrienne I have never seen. Perhaps it is the English habit, but I cannot conceive of those feet in French or American boots.

Furs are almost universally worn in London, but fur so oddly arranged never human creature saw before. To the favourite London cloak we gave the irreverent designation of "the hip-warmer." It was a tight-fitting garment made of cloth or velvet; usually velvet. It seemed anything but warm, about the chest and shoulders; but below the waist would be a band of fur, from a quarter to three-eights of a yard in width. Sometimes this would even be pleated on. It would often be of the softest fur—Russia-sable, silver fox, anything in which the most expense could be displayed—but always it was the suffering hips which were protected by its warmth—those hips on which Dr. Lewis and the dress reformers protest against our hanging the weight of the lightest petticoat, or heating by so much an extra waist-band. The English women ought to be pining and dying by wholesale, if the dress reformers are right; but, on the contrary, they all look healthy and hearty.

We met scores of them, driving by liveried coachmen, in sombre, pompous, costly chariots, and they were seldom a bit better dressed than their pedestrienne sisters. But their outdoor costumes faded into insignificance when compared with their dress at the theatre. We were invited to go to see "Our Boys," at the Vaudeville, one of the prettiest little theatres in London. Our escort was an English baronet: and we determined that America in our persons should do honour to the occasion. Of course we put on our best bonnets—those dainty hats which had sprung fully adorned from the fertile brain of a French milliner, and were the pride of our hearts. We had on our good gowns also, and our fresh gloves; but it was on the hats that we chiefly prided ourselves. We noticed that our escort was in full evening dress, swallow-tail coat and all; but still no misgiving seized us. It was not until we reached the theatre, and were invited by a bland usher to step into the cloak-room, that any doubt suggested itself as to the faultlessness of our costume.

"We have nothing we care to lay aside," we answered.

"Your hats, ladies!" persisted the smiling official. "Our hats! Our best hats! Leave them in the crush of a cloak-room!

Not if we knew it!

"Oh, no, thank you," we said, with an extra-smile. "We prefer to keep our hats on, if you please."

"But it is against the rule. I am sorry to say no 'ats are allowed in the stalls."

And our escort whispered:

"I'm afraid he is right."

So into the cloak-room we went, and surrendered our cherished hats, and felt like Samson after his hair had been cut off.

Our strength was gone. But we recovered our spirits by the time we were well-seated, and had looked around us.

The stalls and the private boxes are the "awful" seats of an English theatre.

We found ourselves in the midst of the haute noblesse.

Some of these gentle creatures we had seen driving in state that very day, in all the pomp of gorgeous equipage and attendant footmen. Here they were at the theatre in evening toilet—*at home* as it were. Well, such toilets!

Some wore tarleton dresses, though the month was February.

Some gowns were low, and some were square-necked, and all were trimmed profusely. But all this was nothing to their heads. Such adornments in the way of hair-dressing American eye never beheld before—they would frighten the American eagle from his loftiest eyrie.

The masses of false hair they wore suggested the

girl on certain bottles of a hair-restorer, whose rippling tresses clothe her as with a garment. The hair of these English women towered pyramid-like on the top of their heads—it drooped in massive braids low on their stately necks; and then the decorations! They wore strings of coloured glass beads,—they wore feathers—they wore artificial flowers, of every hue under the sun; and they wore beads and flowers, and feathers, all in one immortal combination.

(To be continued.)

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

CHAPTER I.

MAUD EVERETT sat by the grand piano in her exquisite morning room, listlessly running her fingers over the ivory keys and humming snatches of sweet simple songs; but there was a weary look on her handsome face, and it seemed an exertion too great to raise her voice to any height at all. At last her hands dropped from the keys and were folded in her lap, her head drooped, and tears welled into her auburn eyes, and

"The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast;
A wish that she hardly dared to own
For something better than she had known."

A casual observer would wonder what it could possibly be that Maud Everett had not got or could not have, for her means seemed illimitable. She was beautiful—a pet of society, and a widow, not yet twenty-seven years of age, and seven years a widow. Maud had loved and truly mourned her husband, and though she had been exceedingly happy in her first marriage, had no desire, or thought she had no desire, to run the risk of trying to relieve her loneliness and enui by a second.

Arnold Everett, she told herself, had been her ideal of a perfect man; his equal could not be found on earth. As to lovers, of course she had an abundance of them, but she was no flirt, and cared little whether she were loved or not by the men. She smiled at their ravings and wows, and returned their presents and letters unopened, and allowed herself to be worshipped only in a quiet distant sort of way.

For a wonder she was as much beloved by women as by men, and really seemed to appreciate their love a great deal more, and had a great many firm female friends, upon which she would shower her favours and caresses that their brothers and brothers' friends would (according to their own version of the story) have given their souls to share. But in vain were sighs, and groans, and heartrending epistles; the marble was marble still, and the statue no sign.

Maud was startled from her gloomy reveries by the ringing of the doorbell, and a minute after was roused into something like life, by the abrupt and rather gushing entrance of a blooming girl-looking woman, who rushed up to her and clasped her in an affectionate, albeit rather rough embrace. Compared with the languid beauty of Maud, she seemed like a breath of fresh mountain air after a lovely though enervating summer day.

"Come, you languid beauty! you eastern princess! rouse thee—why, Maud, you look as if you had lost your last best friend," she gaily said.

"I have," mournfully answered her friend, glancing at the picture over the piano.

"Oh, Maud dear, I did not mean that, you know I did not, you've got a fit of the blues to-day, haven't you? Well, I have come to scare them away; and to come to my errand without any circumlocution, they've sent me to coax you, or try to coax you, to change your mind and join our party to-morrow; say you'll come; there's a dear—and let me make them happy."

"Make them happy!" she bitterly cried; "little would they care where I went if I needed their love or help in any way."

"Oh Maud, how true and bitter you are growing. What has come over you? You were not so bad a month ago—who has been abusing you? Just tell me, and I'll—I'll—talk to them."

Maud smiled.

"You think that would be punishment enough? Well, I don't believe but it would, if we should believe all your husband says—there, don't pout, I know how they can tease. No one has abused me, I have nothing particular to complain of, but a little of everything. I am tired of everything and everybody, I think," woeingly.

"Complimentary, I declare," was poutingly said.

"I want a change—quiet—I am sick of the same round of parties, dissipation and nonsense. I would like to go away somewhere, where I was not known, where I could come and go as I pleased, without question or remark; where, if I stepped my foot beyond the threshold I need not run into some spoony's

mouth, or be obliged to listen to streams of eloquence or showers of twaddle."

"Oh, I see! You wish to be loved for yourself alone?" pressing her hand upon her heart sentimentally.

"Yes," she dreamily answered.

Her friend coloured.

"Maud Everett, do you think my love sordid?"

"No, Flora, I do not," she warmly answered, taking her friend's hand and pressing them, "I think your love is pure gold—your friendship has the true ring; but you are one among many."

"There are many others who would love you just as well if you had not a penny to your name. They wish you to join this party very much, and so do I. We shall miss you much, but I do not wish you to come feeling as you now do, I shall not urge you. Is not that friendship? And I will further prove it. I have a plan that will just suit you. You smile—but I do, for I have been there, and it did not suit me. There was not half life enough; it seemed like Sunday all the time."

Mrs. Everett seemed interested.

"Where is this Eden, pray tell me?"

"It is in Maverell, some twenty miles from here; Mrs. Earle is a very distant relation of ours, second cousin to mother, I believe; a beautiful old lady, educated and well off, but she likes to take one lady chamberlain in the summer for company; in the winter she has her sons."

"Well, of course, there must be a man," laughing.

"Only in the winter, and then not always. Mark, the old adage is of a very racing disposition—lives to camp out, and lives like nothing else; a regular bluff, crusty old bachelor, and Weston is rather delicate and modest for some great consumer either, as he is addition of them. Now don't you think you have found what you want?"

"I don't know, Flora, but I am obliged to you just the same; maybe I shall stay at home for a change," slightly colouring.

"Well, that is the very best I can do for you, and I am in a tremendous hurry, for we are right in the middle of packing—but they caused me so much trouble. I hope you will feel better about it, and join us before the summer is over. Now I must go."

With kiss-and-good-byes the friends parted, and Mrs. Everett watched the bonny lass out of sight, and sighed as she murmured:

"Dear, kind, dreamy soul, how I envy you your sunny nature. I do think I have found the Eden I have longed for, but I dared not say so—I should be followed, and I went not, complaints went. I will pack a couple of trunks with my plainest clothes, and go untroubled and unknown into A—— I will not even write. If she cannot accommodate me I can surely find someone who will. Oh, what a glorious change it will be! I dream I begin to feel quite young again at the mere idea! I will go pack this minute. I expect if Mrs. Weston finds out she will try to laugh me out of the idea. I will leave the house in her charge, and let her think I have gone with the rest."

CHAPTER II.

MAVERELL is a little sunshiny nook of a place about twenty miles from A——. It is not, of course, its true name—and I did not expect any one to believe it was. It is not an idle place, either, for all its stillness, but it is a place where temperance and religion hold sway; not temperance from liquor only, but temperance in all things. A place bounding in lovely walks and drives—with sunny nooks and corners, so beautiful and so rich in floral treasures as to throw the jaded city pleasure-seeker into ecstasies. And there is a beautiful pond, too, so large that it is dignified by the name of Maverell Lake, and at times its bosom is whitened by the snowy petals of the fragrant water-lily.

It is on this lake that we again see Mrs. Everett. Swaying and rocking to the motion of the rippling water, in a tiny boat with an awning, and reclining upon a crimson sofa pillow, within its shade lies Maud with her eyes and mind deeply buried in the pages of a book, and looking as perfect a picture of rest and contentment as it is possible to imagine. She is dressed in a simple morning robe, and a wide straw hat lies upon the seat beside her, and a bunch of freshly gathered lilies lie at her feet.

A short distance from the lake stands Mrs. Earle's pretty little cottage home, built in the Gothic style, and painted a dazzling white, with gleams here and there through its wreaths and bowers of roses, and clematis, and honeysuckle. It is still early, and a slight haze hovers over the lake, which did Sol is doing his best to burn away. The birds are singing their matin songs, and flying from tree to tree in search of food for their open-mouthed nestlings, and the bees' drowsy hum adds another charm to the perfect morning. A little bell sends its tinkling music over the placid water, and the dreamy occupant of



[AT LAST]

the boat slowly rises, and taking the oars in her hand quickly rows to land. She hurries up the bank to be met at the door by handsome smiling Mrs. Earle, who extends her soft white hand in morning greeting; and when Maud places hers in it, she draws her to her side and fondly kisses her. Tears start to Maud's dark eyes as she returns the caress. She has been a month in this peaceful home, and has learned to love Mrs. Earle with almost a daughter's love, for the beautiful and rich Mrs. Everett is an orphan as well as a widow, and her heart is very hungry for love.

Mrs. Earle says gayly, as they enter the house:

"Maud, my dear, I have a surprise in store for you."

"But you know, dear friend, I do not like surprises."

"In general; but this is an exceptional one."

"It seems to make you very happy, so it must be a nice one."

"I think it a delightful one. My Warren came home last night."

Maud stopped and grew pale; here, she thought, was an end to her quiet happiness.

"What all you, dear? You need not fear him, he is one of the quietest boys you ever saw. No more trouble than a bird. I have told him all about you and your quiet ways, and he will not trouble you, and besides he knows where all the prettiest walks are, and mosses, and such things that you are so fond of, and—and—" here they entered the breakfast-room. "Warren, let me present Mrs. Everett, my boarder."

He rose and bowed, and he gazed admiringly at the handsome, pale face of Maud, who seated herself quietly and began slowly to unfold her napkin, without even raising her eyes.

She was thoroughly vexed with him for coming home so out of season.

"I might have known I was too happy, it could not last," she thought to herself.

Good Mrs. Earle could not imagine what had come over the happy spirit of her guest, for she hardly spoke a word throughout the meal.

Breakfast over, Warren went into the garden, and Maud stood quietly by the breakfast-room window and watched him.

It was the first time she had looked at him. She could not help liking him the moment her eyes fell upon his perfectly good face, and he was handsome, too, with a tall, slim, boyish figure, bright laughing blue eyes, and wavy chestnut hair. He was slightly pale, and did not look over strong; but looks are deceptive sometimes, she thought; he must be considerably younger than she was—in fact, did not look dangerous or troublesome at all—so she grew quite good-natured again, and ere a week had passed they were the best of friends.

He took her to ride, to row, and to walk, found her beautiful mosses, and ferns, and vines, and together they made the loveliest hanging baskets and picture-frames from cones and twigs, and the days sped apace and the evenings were delightful, for they were both fine singers, and Maud thought she could not be happier—her fears and her heart were at perfect rest.

Warren was her brother, her dog, her slave, but not her lover—he was such a boy; so she let him wait on her, fold her shawl around her beautiful form, hold her hand in his and look into her great dark eyes with perfect trust.

Maud grew handsomer and gayer every day that passed. She had no desire to return to her elegant city home and her gay companions. She thought she should never care to return.

One bright September evening she awoke from her dream of security and realised that she stood upon the quivering crust of a volcano—realised that the boy was a boy no longer, and the man bade fair to be her master.

It happened thus: They were upon the verandah overlooking the lake, and the moon was brightly re-

flected in its glimmering bosom. The air blew keen. Maud leant dreamily against one of the pillars, and unconsciously shivered. Warren hastened to the hall stand and brought a warm shawl and wrapped around her. She raised her eyes to thank him, but the words died on her lips and a thrill ran through heart and brain at the look of adoring love she saw in his eyes. She grew pale and turned coldly from him, and was not herself again the whole evening, retiring earlier than usual.

Warren was intensely mystified at her strange behaviour, and troubled to know what could have caused it. He did not dream that he had betrayed himself to her quick eye, and if he had he could not have imagined it a crime.

Her chilliness lasted two days, and greatly distressed Warren; then, as he made no more advances, it dispersed, and their friendship stood again upon the old footing, and he was happy.

He did not fully realise his love for Maud yet—he knew he was happier with her than he had ever been with any one else, that he thought her the most beautiful as well as the best woman he had ever seen, that he would die for her if necessary, but did not realise that if she went away from him life might as well follow, for he felt so safe. No thought of separation had as yet crossed his mind. Like the famed lotus-eater, he was wrapped so closely in delicious dreams that he gave no thought to the bitter and sure-to-come awakening. It was coming slowly and surely.

Mrs. Earle met them at dinner with a smiling face, and informed them that her eldest son, Mark, was coming home, and as the letter announcing his coming had been delayed, they might expect him at any minute.

Maud could not help feeling annoyed, but was careful not to show it, for Mrs. Earle was so delighted that it would have been cruel to have done so.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY the following morning Maud was in the garden long before the others were stirring. It was a new habit of hers—early rising, in accordance with her new life; and it agreed with her, and she enjoyed it intensely. Everything seemed so fresh and dewy, and all around so perfectly quiet. It was nearing breakfast time though, and her quiet would soon be broken. As she thought this, she reached to gather a cluster of beautiful roses which twined one of the pillars of the veranda, but standing on tiptoe she found them just beyond her reach.

With an exclamation of impatience she turned to behold a tall stranger at her side, who with an "Allow me," reached them easily, and with a bow handed them to the beautiful and astonished woman. Smiling at her look of perplexity, he doffed his hat, and said gayly but respectfully:

"Mark Earle, at your service, miss—"

"She answered, "You are mistaken, sir. Mrs. Everett at yours."

"Ah, pardon me, madam, but you look so extremely young," and he would have liked to add beautiful, "that I did not dream you could be married. I see you must be an inmate of this little nest, so I will e'en ask you for information concerning my mother."

"She is perfectly well, sir, or was last night, and your brother also."

"My brother!" looking slightly annoyed, she thought, "surely he is not at home, too. A rather strange coincidence, I declare—I do not know when it has happened before, not for years, certainly," then laughing, "You must have been the magnet, madam; is your husband with you, Mrs. Everett?"

"He is dead, sir," she simply answered.

"Oh, pardon me, madam. I am always committing some blunder or other, but I have never heard mother speak of Mrs. Everett as among her acquaintances."

"I am but a late acquisition," she smiled, "but I trust a pleasant one. I have been here since the last of June, and I have been extremely happy."

"How long has been my brother Warren here?"

"A little over a month, sir." Again that look of annoyance.

"I suppose you are the best of friends?" looking her through with his piercing grey eyes. She blushed as she answered, and hated herself for doing so. "Yes, we are very good friends indeed, he is excellent company."

Here Mrs. Earle, bearing voices, stepped to the door, and with a cry of joy had her eldest boy clasped in her warm motherly arms. Maud slipped into the house, leaving them alone.

Breakfast over, Maud and Warren strolled into the garden, and Mark sat absentmindedly balancing his spoon upon the edge of his empty cup, his mother watching him with happy tears in her eyes. At last

he broke the silence, abruptly asking his mother:

"Who is Mrs. Everett, mother?"

"I do not know, dear, only she is a dear friend of Flora's—who was not very well, needed change of air, and so Flora recommended this as a pleasant place. I've often heard Flora speak of a friend as being very rich; but her husband is dead, and I think he must have lost his property, for her clothes are very plain and simple, and she has no desire to return. Isn't she lovely, Mark?" she enthusiastically inquired of him.

"Yes, and Warren seems to think so, too," frowning.

"Yes, I think he likes her very much indeed; but she seems to think he is a boy, and treats him like one. I don't think she dreams he is older by a year than she is."

"You'd better look out, mother mine, or you will have him committing suicide yet—these handsome women of the world, and widows, at that, do not often throw themselves away on men as poorly off as Warren, and only notice them to lead to destruction."

"Oh, Mark! how you do wrong my darling Maud; if he loves her—and I don't see how he can help it—it is not her fault; she is as natural as a child, and I do not think she dreams of love."

"So much the more danger, then," he said, rising. "You are bound to find fault—see that you do not fall in love with her yourself," she laughed.

"I am more than half in love with her already."

She looked at him soberly—earnestly.

"I mean it! I agree with you perfectly; she is the loveliest, most graceful, most engaging woman I have met in years, and I am going out to talk with her. Warren must not think to monopolise her, now I am here."

And he left the room, laughing at his mother's dismayed look.

For two weeks it was a race between the brothers who should pay Maud the most attention, and a pretty even one at that: then Mark seemed to be gaining, and Warren began to despair, for Maud, he fancied, preferred Mark's company to his. He began to grow pale, and lose flesh and appetite.

And in her heart Maud did prefer Mark; he was the acme of manhood, she thought, tall, strong and noble; not, perhaps, so handsome as Warren, but with more strength of character, more mind. She thought she could love such a man with a strong and lasting love, and yet she had been very happy with Warren until Mark's advent, and sometimes even now regretted the bygone quiet happiness.

"Maud, will you sail with me this morning?" asked Warren, a month after Mark's arrival. She shivered.

"Sail? Oh Warren! it is too cold."

"It is rather raw, I confess, but I thought you could wrap up pretty warm, and it would be pleasant, Maud," he cried, passionately. "I am sorry my brother came home; you would go anywhere with me before—I almost hate him!" And he strode hastily from the room, leaving Maud dismayed and trembling.

He had been gone but a few minutes when Mark entered, and seating himself beside her, said:

"Maud, I want you to ride with me this morning."

"I cannot, Mark; I have just refused to sail with Warren."

"I should think so! the idea of such a thing! I think the fellow must be insane. But because you refused to sail with him, there is no reason that you should not ride with me, is there?"

"Only that he would be offended."

"Are you then so fearful of giving offence in that direction? Or, excuse me, Mrs. Everett, perhaps he feels that he has a right to make such insane requests."

She never lifted her eyes, but kept on with her crocheting.

"Am I right in my conjecture?"

"What right have you to question me?" she coldly answered.

"The right of friendship only, a very recent one, 'tis true, but none the less sincere," he warmly answered. "Will you go to ride with me? if not this morning, say this afternoon?" he pleaded.

"Will you go to ride with me? if not this morning, say this afternoon?" he pleaded.

"This afternoon, then," she said.

"Thank you for the concession—what are you making?" he asked, watching the snowy fingers, as the little hook ran in and out of the dainty piece of work in her lap.

She held it up, and laughingly replied:

"A tidy for your mother; shall I make one for you? I hear you keep house in the wood sometimes. I did not expect to see quite such a civilised being, from the report I received of you."

"Who was your informant? my amiable brother?"

"Oh no—my informant was a lady. Why do you speak so of your brother?"

"Because you side with him, for one reason; and then our tastes were never alike—until very lately," he added—watching the rich blood colour her face, exultingly. "I know Flora was never a great admirer of mine. Yes—you see I know who it was. I used to tease her unmercifully, I must confess. Just see how mother's roses are peeping at us. I'll teach them better manners."

He left his seat, and striding to the casement, plucked a half-blown bud. Then he seated himself close to Maud, and stooping to look into her eyes, said:

"May I put it in your hair?"

Without a word she bent her head, and with a caressing motion he placed it amongst her braids, then leaning fondly over her, left a kiss upon her forehead. Her hands trembled, and tears rushed to her eyes. In the doorway, pale as death, stood Warren, with great drops of agony starting from his white brow, and hands clenched, until the nails penetrated the flesh. Smothering a groan, he left as noiselessly as he had come.

Mark watched her emotion silently for a second, then rising, remarked, as calmly as usual:

"The roses are late this year." And without another word left the apartment.

With dismayed eyes, Maud watched until he was out of sight, then with a heart bursting with bitterness and anger, she started to her feet, and snatching the bud from its resting-place, trampled it beneath her feet, whispering with whitened lips:

"How dare he! how dare he!"

She flew to her room, from which she did not emerge until it was almost time for dinner; then she was her own cool calm self again.

"He shall not guess how he has made me suffer," she said, as she gazed at her beautiful form in the mirror before descending. "I think I hate him now."

As she passed the library door, a low moan broke from her ear. She entered, and saw Warren stretched upon the lounge—with his head buried in his folded arms. She went to his side, and laid her cool white hand upon his brow, as she gently asked:

"Warren, my poor boy, what is the matter?"

He started like one shot, and grasping her hand tightly, said fiercely:

"Boy! I am no boy—I am a man—call me a boy no longer!"

Then looking up piteously into her face, and winding his arm about her, he asked:

"Oh Maud! Do you love my brother? He says you are going to ride with him, after refusing to go with me. Maud, if you do, you will not find me alive when you return!"—wildly.

"Warren, you are mad," she said, in a frightened voice.

"Yes, I think I am; but you have made me so. I was sane enough until I knew you; but you have not answered my question—do you love my brother?"

His eyes glowed, his lips trembled, and he grasped her hand so fiercely that she could hardly restrain a cry—but she answered coldly:

"You have no right to ask me such a question."

"I have the right, I claim the right, for I love you, a thousand times better than he can, with his cold calculating nature. I loved you before he ever saw you, and want you for my wife. He has always said he would not marry unless he married money. I want only love. Oh Maud, my darling, my darling, love me, love me, or I shall die."

He clasped her hand—and fell at her feet, looking up into her face with eyes dropping great scalding tears.

"Get up, Warren: Oh do get up! suppose your mother—or—or—Mark should come."

"What if they did? I am not ashamed of my love. I shall stay here until you answer my question."

"Which one?" she demurely asked.

"Do you love Mark Earle?"

"No," she quickly answered.

With a cry of joy he sprang to his feet, and had her in his arms.

"Now answer me two more—Do you love me? Will you be my wife?"

With bursting heart he waited for her answer. Swift blushes ran over neck and brow, and, laying her head upon his bosom, to hide them, she murmured "Yes" to both.

"Thank Heaven! Oh my darling! Thank Heaven!"

"Oh Maud!" he said, a few minutes later, "I have suffered all but death this morning. I was at the door, and saw Mark kiss you."

She paled a little, but made no answer.

"I made sure I had lost, and he won."

"You see you were mistaken, do you not, dear?"

"I can scarcely believe my happiness—there is the bell, come, let us tell mother. She will be so pleased—she loves you so well."

Maud grew confused, and trembled, as she drew back.

"Wait a while before you tell her, Warren, and do not—do not—tell Mark at all—I mean for the present," she begged.

"Not tell Mark?" in bewildered astonishment.

"Not just at present, dear Warren. I have particular reasons."

"Oh, certainly not, if you have reasons," he rather coldly said. "Maud—Maud—you are not—not—in fact, does not even dream of such a thing."

"No, Warren, I am not," she honestly replied. "I may have had other fancies for a while, but if I did, they are all flown now, and I would not exchange your dear honest love for any other on earth."

And she meant it. True, she had liked Mark intensely, almost learned to love him, but she thought:

"I have found him out. I know he loves me as well as his selfish nature will ever allow him to love any one, and a dozen times he has been on the point of telling me so, then something held him back. It was his doubt whether I had lost my property when Arnold died or not. Several times, I have noticed, he drew as near the subject as he dared, but I always evaded an answer. How different is dear Warren! he does not care whether I have a penny to my name or not—in fact, does not even dream of such a thing. I am sorry Mark ever came. I was learning to love my poor boy fast, and never was so completely restful and happy before in my life. Then he had to come, like a troublesome dream, and spoil all; but the dream is past, and I am awake again. I will no longer be a toy for Mark's pleasure. I know I could bring him to my feet with very little trouble, but he is not worth the trouble. I will not go to ride with him, and, if Warren wishes, I will go through fire and water for him."

These were her reflections in her chamber, hence her favourable answer to Warren's petition for her love.

CHAPTER IV.

MAUD sauntered into the parlour after dinner, where Mark was idly loitering in an easy-chair, reading.

She stopped at the centre-table, and slowly turned the leaves of a book. He glanced up under his lashes at her.

"Mark," she quietly said, without turning her head. "I am not going to ride with you this afternoon."

"What is the reason?" he cried, starting upright, suddenly.

"Warren does not wish me to go."

"Oh, I was not aware Warren was your master," he sarcastically replied.

"Nor I," she coolly answered; "he is my friend, though."

"Why do you not say lover?" he sneered.

"Lover, then. I think that is more applicable, as he vows he will not live to see me come back."

"And of course you believe it! What does the spoony fear? Does he think I mean to steal a march upon him, and propose, while I had you all to myself? Well, perhaps I did," gazing at her tenderly.

"Then it is doubly lucky that I have decided not to go."

"What do you mean?" he cried, rising quickly and grasping her hand.

She drew it away, and decidedly answered:

"That I should have been obliged to decline the honour."

"Maud," he cried, fiercely, "you do not know what you say—you cannot."

"Oh yes I do," she gayly answered, looking him bravely in the eyes with her honest brown orbs.

"Never was more in earnest in my life."

"Then you have been deceiving me," he passionately cried.

"Not so, Mark; you have been deceiving yourself—and if I had believed in your professions of love, would have cruelly deceived me. Mark Earle! you do not know yourself—you could not do so much injustice to yourself as to tie your roving disposition and love to a poor widow's apron strings. Good-bye, for now, I am going to sail with Warren, if he still wishes me to."

And with cool and graceful dignity she left the room, and Mark to his reflections; and they were bitter enough.

He sank back into his chair with tightly compressed lips, and ashy cheeks. After a while muttering:

"She is poor, then, and she thinks me mercenary, and I have lost her."

His head sank on the arm of his chair, and sobs shook his stalwart frame.

"Oh Heavens!" he gasped. "I would rather

have your love now, Maud Everett, could I gain it, than untold gold. What a blind idiot I have been—my love! my life! and yet this morning I could have sworn she loved me, else why those blushes, those trembling hands? Oh idiot! you have had your chance, and lost it. Perhaps it is not too late, after all—perhaps she was only trying me," he cried, half starting from his chair, then sinking back wearily, as glancing into the garden he saw Maud and Warren sauntering up the path, and noticed the look upon their faces. "No, Mark Earle, 'lay not the flatteringunction to thy soul,' she loves my milksoop brother, and has been playing with me. I might have known it. He had a month the start of me."

Yes, Mark Earle, he had a month in time the start, it is true, but that is not all—he had the start of you in real worth. He had the advantage of you in his more honourable nature, his more honest love, in a disposition as gentle and tender as a child's—generous as the sun.

No taint of avarice staining the white escutcheon of his soul, and a heart that, once given to a worthy object, death alone could release.

October came, with its cool winds and glorious suns, and the garden was stripped of its bloom and beauty, and still Mrs. Everett lingered in her country retreat.

It was a beautiful, sunshiny day, and Maud and Warren were going for a canter. He was just lifting her into the saddle, and she was laughing at some remark of his, looking the picture of health and beauty, and Mark stood behind the lace hangings of the parlour windows, watching with an anxious pang at his heart, when his mother entered and stood beside him, with a happy smile on her lovely old face.

"How happy dear Maud looks. Don't they make a handsome pair?"

He turned rather angrily, and said:

"What do you mean, mother?"

"What do I mean? Why, do you not know they are going to be married soon? They have been engaged three weeks. What ails you, Mark? how pale you are!"

"Nothing," he brusquely answered, turning to the window again. "See, they are starting."

Maud turned in her saddle at a word from Warren, and kissed the tips of her dainty fingers to his mother, blowing the kiss saucily, as she saw the smile that her action brought to the loved face. Mark bit his lip fiercely, and a great pang tugged at his heartstrings.

"The darling," said his mother; "and so you did not know it? She begged me not to say anything about it, at first, but I thought, of course, you knew it, and I got a letter from Flora this morning—inquiring about Maud—perhaps you would like to read it? I have a cake in the oven, and must not stay any longer. Here it is."

She placed the letter in Mark's listless fingers, and left the room. He sank into the chair beside him, and fell into a reverie, from which he awoke with a sigh, and slowly opened the letter, and began to read—it began:

"**MY DEAR THIRD COUSIN, OR FOURTH,**—I am in great trouble and tribulation of mind. I am hunting after a lost sheep, or, in other words, Mrs. Maud Arnold Everett. Her housekeeper is wild, I might almost say on the verge of insanity. She thought her mistress at the mountains with us. We arrived home last night; and when she found Maud was not with us, and had not been, I thought she would faint. Maud is not in the habit of writing home, so she has heard no word of her all summer. We are late, as we travelled about some time, and it became too cool for comfort. I told Mrs. Weston I thought I knew where her traitor was, and I think she is with you;—am I not right?

"I hope she has found what she wanted, rest and quiet. She is very lovely, very peculiar, and very rich. She had a fancy that people sought her only for her money, and said she was tired of her gold worshippers, and wanted to be loved for herself alone. I hope she has got her wish. Dear Mrs. Earle, write soon, and set our hearts at rest."

"Your loving Third or Fourth Cousin,

"FLORA MC'LIMSEY."

"P. S.—'The madcap, wild as ever, aunt I?'"

"And she has got her wish—more than her wish," groaned Mark, crumpling the letter in a fierce hand. "She want'd to be loved for herself alone. Oh Maud! Maud! you are avenged, for I love you. I love you, and for yourself alone, but you are lost to me, lost to me for ever. No," he laughed, scornfully, "she will be my sister. I have not quite lost her; my sister, when my very soul cries out for—my wife. Idiot, idiot, stupid idiot that I was! to let the idea and fear of poverty stand between us—I would rather starve with Maud than live in the

greatest luxury with any other woman I ever saw."

We will pass over six months.

Warren and Maud have just returned from their wedding tour, and he is off somewhere with his mother about the house. He has grown stouter and stronger, and the brown of travel adds the only charm lacking to his handsome face in the days of our early acquaintance with him, and he says he is perfectly happy, and no one seeing his smiling, glowing eyes, would dare to doubt him.

Maud, too, has grown lovelier, if it were possible, and so Mark seems to think, as he devours her with long eyes, as she sits at the piano, softly playing a dream-like waltz; he draws nearer to her, and bending over, says, gently:

"You seem very happy with your boy, Maud?"

She slowly lifts her head, and fixing her calm eyes upon his tender ones answers, and her words seem to keep time to the pulsing throbs of the tune. "I am happy—intensely happy, and may it please Heaven to let my happiness last, and grant me power to make this world an earthly Eden for the dearest and best man Heaven ever let live on its beauteous footstool."

"Amen," breathed Mark, stooping and gently kissing her brow—"My sister!"

With a sigh of regret he left her side, and stood dreamily gazing out into the snow. "Fly him, kind reader!"

H. E. P.

FACETIA.

AN ACTOR'S DILEMMA.—Dumasine, one of the most melodramatic actors on the French stage, appeared in a drama where, to show his skill with the pistol, he was supposed to extinguish a candle by a shot from his weapon. The light was placed on a table, near a small round hole which had been pierced through the scene. The effect was produced by the prompter, who placed his mouth to the aperture and blew out the flame at the moment the shot was heard. This always brought down the house, and Dumasine was very proud of the little bit of fat; but a fellow-actor, who owed him a grudge, stuck a piece of gold-beater's skin over the hole, and when the pistol was fired the candle still remained flaring away, in spite of the efforts of the prompter. The actor, in a horrible state of confusion, drew out the companion pistol from his belt, and aimed at the light once more. Before he had time to pull the trigger the malicious wag tore away the skin and blew through the hole, the candle going out apparently of its own accord.

"I NARROWLY escaped being cut off with a shillinx," said a solemn young man.

"How did you escape it, sir?" asked a bystander.

"My father had no shilling," was the solemn reply.

MOTHER: "Lily, you don't seem to take so much interest in your French lately. What's the matter?"

LILY: "Well, mother, French doesn't seem so interesting now Madame Felicité is teaching us, as it appeared when Professor Dupont taught us."

MOTHER: "Was the Professor a young man?"

LILY: "Yes, mother, about twenty-four, and such commanding eyes."

MOTHER: "Um!—Yes—oh! yes; I understand."

"PAPA, me has been baptised, aint me?" asked a little three-year-old.

"Yes, dear."

"Then me wen't have to be baptised again?"

"No; but can you remember anything about being baptised?"

"I does I can."

"Well, wh. t did the minister do to you?"

"He shoved up my sleeve, and put a knife in my arm."

A LINE TO STAND ON.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are being raised for the benefit of the newly-elected Professor of Chinese at Oxford—Dr. Legge. It is satisfactory to think that the Celestial language and literature have at last got one Legge at all events, if not as yet a firm footing, in Oxford.

A MINISTER, in one of his parochial visits, met a cowherder and asked him what o'clock it was. "About twelve, sir," was the reply. "Well," quoth the minister, "I thought it had been more." "It's never any more here," said the boy. "It just begins at one again."

One day recently the Pope, talking with some monsignors, about the deplorable condition of the Catholic Church, one of them said: "Oh, we have

nothing to fear, your Holiness, for it is written that St. Peter's bark shall never be shipwrecked." "Yes," answered the Pope, "that's all very well for the bark, but how about her crew?"

The custom of appointing young lawyers to defend pauper criminals received a back-set the other day in our district court. His Honour, Judge Neenan, had appointed two young lawyers to defend an old and experienced horse thief. After inspecting his counsel for some time in silence, the prisoner rose in his place and addressed the bench: "Air them to defend me?" "Yes, sir," said his honour. "Both of 'em," inquired the prisoner. "Both of them" responded the judge. "Then I plead guilty," and the poor fellow took his seat and sighed heavily.

AN INGENIOUS man, called by ladies a wretch, calculates that letting 1,000 represent a woman's chances of marriage in the whole course of her life, 136 of those chances are lost when she is seventeen years old, 533 when she is twenty-one, 925 when she is twenty-seven, 992 when she is thirty-three, and the entire thousand when she is forty-five.

AN AMUSING story is told of a lady who pressed a friend to visit her in the country. On his arrival at —, he was at once shown to his room, the dressing-ball, as he was informed, having already rung. On entering the room in which the company assembled before dinner he found himself alone with a little girl elegantly dressed, who, as the event proved, was quite up to the occasion. He spoke to her in language which he supposed to be suited to her years, and, for a time, they got on very well together, when she presently bethought herself that she would like to know the name of her new friend. He at once complied with her request, and told her his name; to which she instantly replied, with the utmost naïvete, "Oh, then, you are the man that mamma says has snug himself into society!" Pleasant announcement in the first moments of an arrival at a strange house, especially when it suddenly flashed across our friend's mind that it had been a special proviso in the invitation that he should bring all his music with him.

A ROMANTIC STORY.—The steamers of the P. and O. Company have been the scene of many a romantic incident, but we fancy the following story, told by an Indian paper, is unique in the company's history. Not many weeks ago a letter was received at the company's London offices, dated from an hotel near St. James's-street, stating that a lady had recently died leaving a child of some eighteen months old, and that her husband, who was at Malta, was anxious to have the child sent to him there. Would the company be kind enough to say how this could be most comfortably managed, and to name the charges? The company promptly replied that the child could be sent in one of their steamers, and that it would be placed in the charge of the stewardess. In due course a handsome carriage drove up to the office, containing a lady and the little innocent, and all charges having been paid, the child was duly booked for transmission to its papa at Malta, and duly forwarded in the charge of the stewardess. When the steamer arrived at Malta, however, no loving papa put in an appearance to claim the interesting consignment, and the company's agent could not discover any trace of "any such person" at the station, nor were telegraphic inquiries as to the sender more satisfactory. Here was a dilemma; the captain of the steamer determined to carry his pretty little foundling on to Calcutta, and to take it back on his homeward voyage. The wife of a gentleman engaged in trade at Madras heard the story, however, and being herself without children, offered to take in the deserted one; and the result is that the little east-waster is now installed in a happy and refined home at Madras. No doubt the P. and O. Company will adopt precautions to prevent a form of desertion, so successfully carried out, from becoming too fashionable.

THALASSA! THALASSA!!

BROWN (to the old family servant): "There, nurse! What do you think of it?"

OLD NURSE (she came from West Suffolk, and had never seen the sea): "Iw', Mr. Charles, do it alius keep a muddlin' about like that?"

Punch.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

NOT long ago there was a discussion as to the suitability of the names given to Her Majesty's ships. If the discussion had extended to the names of the names of officers, Mr. Punch would not, perhaps, have had the pleasure of congratulating a Mr. James Tremble on his appointment as Staff-surgeon to the Terror.

Punch.

HORSE AND FOOT.

THERE are many persons far North who are likely to see a remarkable discrepancy in the newspaper announcement subjoined respecting—

"THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW.—It should have been stated that the Brigade of Guards at the Review on Saturday was commanded by Colonel de Hornay of the Grenadier Guards."

We shall probably hear from numerous friends beyond the Tweed that they wonder that the Grenadier Guards, being a foot regiment, has a colonel who, as far as his name points, ought to belong to the Cavalry.

—Punch.

"TENDER AND TRUE."

LITTLE GIRL: "Oh please, sir, I've brought your shirt 'ome, but mother says she can't wash it no more, 'cos she was obliged to paste it up agen the wall and chuck soap-suds at it, it's so tender."

—Fun.

THE mother of two sons, twins, met one of the brothers in a field one morning.

"Which of you two boys am I speaking to?" asked the mother; "is it you or your brother?"

"Why?" inquired the lad, prudently.

"Because, if it is your brother I will box his ears."

"It is not my brother; it is I."

"Then your brother is wearing your coat, for yours had a hole in it."

"No, mother, I am wearing my own coat."

"Bless me!" cried the mother, looking at him intently, "you are your brother, after all!"

A REALLY GREAT TRAVELLER.

The sci-distant "largest daily" contains a curious advertisement addressed to "Mary." Among other information of a rollicking kind published in it is this:—"I go abroad a few weeks on 3d." The Standard has within the past few months shown in a somewhat novel light as regards both humour and money, but the most able of its contributors and financiers, even when combined, are as nothing before an unknown and mysterious advertiser. Thus true greatness will ever assert itself, though it has to pay five shillings an insertion. —Fun.

TO THE REST OF HER KNOWLEDGE

92 X: "It's very likely as you did lose the purse in the bus, marm; and where might you 'ave got it at?"

Elderly Party: "Tottenhamsh-Critch-Roge."

92 X: "Yes, but what part? Did you get it at the Horse Show?"

E. P.: "Young man, you didn't ought to ask such question. Don't know the nasty publick houses by (hic) name."

—Fun.

OAKWARD RATHER.

REV. MR. SPOONER (tenderly, to eligible widow): "How beautifully emblematic is this of the relations of man and wife. See how the graceful ivy, womanlike, clings for support to the stalwart oak. Ah, dear madam, a husband's fond protection!"

WIDOW: "And supposin' the hawk is too little and the hivy too big—what then, Mr. Spooner?"

—Fun.

PROOF POSITIVE.

AT HAMMERSMITH Police-court the other day a man was charged with being a lunatic at large. The only proof against him was that he had been heard to say he could provide London with a continuous supply of pure water. Small as this may at first sight appear, it was more than sufficient, and the maniac was at once removed under strong guard. From which no one, and ourselves least of all, would wish to see so evidently desperate and dangerous a fanatic released.

—Fun.

STATISTICS.

THE COST OF EDUCATION.—The Treasury has received a return "of the cost of public elementary education, and the sources from which it was defrayed in Great Britain and Ireland for 1874-75." The imperial grant for the year ended 31st March, 1875, including administration and inspection, was, for England and Wales, £1,356,746; Scotland, £209,529; Ireland, £682,195; total for the United Kingdom, £2,228,470. The amount locally raised in the year ended 30th September last was, from voluntary subscriptions in the United Kingdom, £1,198,098; from endowments, £118,545; from rates, £846,065; total locally raised, £2,160,580 for England and Wales, £183,983 for Scotland, and £116,603 for Ireland. The percentage of total expenditure locally raised was 64.56 in England and Wales, 69.76 in Scotland, 14.97 in Ireland, and 57.57 in the United Kingdom. The imperial grant for Ireland is set down for the financial year 1875-76, and not, as in the return for Great Britain, 1874-75, because the local expenditure is made out under three heads, which cover nine months of the year 1875-76, and, under one head, that of rates, for the whole financial year 1875-76, the first year in which rates were levied in Ireland for national education.

By a return just issued it is shown that the cost

of public elementary education in the year 1874-5 amounted to £5,289,036. The Imperial grant in the United Kingdom was £2,228,470, expended in the year ended the 31st March, 1875, and the amount locally raised £3,060,566. The percentage of total expenditure locally raised was in the United Kingdom 57.87.

THE NATIONAL DEBT has been reduced from £283,519,326 in 1857-8 to £775,348,066 in the year ending March 31, 1876. During the years from 1857 to 1876, however, a new debt to the extent of £28,656,441 has been created.

THE OLD LOG CHURCH.

The old-time, log-built meeting-house
Still stands its ground where the cross-roads meet,
And the chestnuts over it swing their boughs,
And the birds of the forest sing blithe and sweet,
As they swing and sing in the long age,
When the tall backwoodsman, sturdy and grim,
With their mighty axes the trunks laid low,
And reared a temple from out the dim And solemn woods, with their strange, soft stir,
Like the rustling robes of a worshipper.

The roof-tree moulder, the giant hole
That served as a step to the massive door,
Is rotting over a chipmunk's hole
That pierces under the sunken floor;
The cracks have widened the legs between,
Through which the ruin is traced within,
Where rats at riot the ivy green
O'er wrecks where pulpits and pews have been;
And the owl's dull whoop, from an unseen perch,
Kings sadly at times through the old log church.

But still it is good that it holds its ground
In the dress in which it was first attired,
While the farmer's houses for miles around
To clapboards and paint long since aspired,
It mutely speaks of the sterling days
When life was fashioned without veneer,
When men cared more for the truth than praise,
And a woman's smile, or a woman's fear,
Meant just its showing—of sweet and salt—
And honour was honour, and fault was fault.

Then the red deer leaped in the cedar brake,
And the red man fitted his shaft to bow,
And it was ever but give and take—
A grip for a grip, and a blow for a blow,
And, in fancy, again I can see them flock
From cabin to church-door, foe begirt,
In coonskin castor and hunting-frock,
With gun on shoulder, and eyes alert—
The one on the women, the other at work
For savage or beast in the shades a-lurk.

Oh, those were the days that nerved the heart
And steeled the spirit through danger's ways!
And I love to think of them now as apart
From the selfish ease of our latter days.
They stand in the memory staunch and gaunt,
As this old house stands at the cross-roads here—
Baref of use, and the sullen haunt
Of bats and owls this many a year,
But neglect or time cannot dim or smirch
The self-respect of the old log church.

M. D. M.

GEMS.

THE LOWEST RESIGNATION is not to be found in martyrdom: it is only to be found when we have covered our heads in silence, and felt "I am not worthy to be a martyr; the truth shall prosper but not by me."

NEVER go back. What you attempt, do it with your strength. Determination is omnipotent. If the prospect be somewhat darkened, put the fire of resolution to your soul, and kindle a flame that nothing but death can extinguish.

We are born for a higher world than that of earth,

there is a realm where rainbows never fade—where the stars will be out before us like islets that slumber on the ocean, and where the beings that pass before us like shadows will stay in our presence for ever.

GOOD talkers are becoming rare, now-a-days, but are occasionally to be met with. Of one whose conversation is very entertaining, but rather disconnected, a witty lady once remarked, "Oh yes; he is very clever; but he talks like a book in which there are leaves occasionally missing."

TRUE happiness is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise; it arises, in the first place, from the enjoyment of one's self, and in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions. False happiness loves to be in a crowd, and to draw the eyes of the world upon her. She does not receive any satisfaction from the applauses which she gives herself, but from the admiration which she raises in others.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

POWDER FOR PRODUCING OZONE.—In order to produce artificial ozone, Mr. Lender makes use of equal parts of peroxide of manganese, permanganate of potash, and oxalic acid. When this mixture is placed in contact with water, ozone is quickly generated. For a room of medium size two spoonfuls of this powder, placed on a dish and occasionally diluted with water, would be sufficient. The ozone develops itself; it disinfects the surrounding air without producing cough.

RICH CAKE.—One pound of ground rice, one of sugar, half pound butter, six eggs; flavour with lemon or vanilla, or to suit taste.

TO WHITEN TEETH.—For whitening the teeth there is nothing superior to wood charcoal very finely powdered. Take a few shavings of Castile soap, and dissolve in spirits with the aid of heat. Use this solution to make with the charcoal a very stiff paste, adding a little syrup or honey to sweeten it, and scent to suit.

TOMATO CATEUP.—One bushel ripe tomatoes; slice, and sprinkle with plenty of salt; put in a porcelain-lined kettle and simmer three or four hours; strain through a colander or sieve, then put in a flannel bag the following spices, bruised: Two ounces black pepper (whole), two ounces bird's-eye pepper, two ounces cinnamon, one ounce mace, four ounces white mustard seed, two ounces allspice, half pound garlic, peeled and sliced. Boil down to a thick consistency. While boiling throw in the bag of spices; allow it to remain in for half an hour. When boiled to the requisite thickness add one dessert-spoonful of brandy or whiskey; allow it to cool; put in bottles. Catsup from this receipt will keep for twenty years if well corked.

MISCELLANEOUS.

There is now at Newark, New Jersey, a bookcase which belonged to Napoleon I. It was brought to the United States by "Peter Parley" (Mr. Goodrich), who bought it while he was an American Consul at Paris. It subsequently passed into the hands of its present owner, Mr. Day. It is beautifully carved piece of black oak, with swinging pivot doors. Its size about 5 feet by 7 feet, and on the face are skillful carvings of clusters of fruit, heads of lions and owls, and two or three Roman busts.

In pursuance of the commands of Her Majesty the Queen, the Band of the Portsmouth Division of Royal Marines are to wear the Prince of Wales's Plumes in their caps, to commemorate their attendance upon His Royal Highness during his voyage to India and back.

It has been discovered that some of the Etruscan antiquities recently bought for the Royal Museum at Berlin are forgeries.

The Newgate prize poem for next year, for Oxford University, will be upon a subject highly interesting to the people of the North. The subject will be the Battle of Stamford Bridge, A.D. 1066, in which Harold, the English king, defeated the Normans under King Harald and Earl Tostig.

The new French postage-stamps are now in circulation. They represent Commerce with the caduceus and Peace with the olive branch joining hands over a terrestrial globe, upon which is placed a number indicating the value of the stamp.

The portrait of Queen Elizabeth, now placed in the Guildhall Library, is the property of the Weavers' Company, the most ancient of the City guilds.

We hear that a project is afoot for the erection of a statue to the memory of the Scotch poet, Tam o' Shanter, at Paisley, the place of his birth.

CONTENTS.

	Page
FADING AWAY	313
HOW MEN BECOME IM-	
MORTAL	316
PUBLIC AMUSEMENT	316
THE BEST MUM	316
VINCENT LUTTREL;	
OR, FRIENDSHIP	
BETRAYED	317
BEEBIE	319
ARRIVAL OF TELESCOPE	
FISH FROM CHINA	319
EXILED FROM HOME	320
THINKING ALOUD	320
TRUE WORTH	322
FASHIONABLE FOLLIES	322
REUBEN; OR, ONLY A	
GIPSY	325
SCIENCE	327
BASIL RIVINGTON'S	
ROMANCE	327
LET	329
LETTERS FROM AMER-	
ICAN ABROAD	330
IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN	331
<hr/>	
FACETIE	334
MISCELLANEOUS	335
GENS	335
HOUSEHOLD TIPS	335
SURKS	335
STATISTICS	335
<hr/>	
EXILED FROM HOME,	
commenced in	663
REUBEN; OR, ONLY A	
GIPSY, commenced	
in	675
VINCENT LUTTREL;	
OR, FRIENDSHIP	
BETRAYED; com-	
menced in	678
THE SPOILED CHILD	
commenced in	618
BASIL RIVINGTON'S	
ROMANCE, com-	
menced in	683
TRUE WORTH com-	
menced in	683

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

GERTRUDE.—We have said over and over again that it is very improper for a young lady to correspond with a young gentleman to whom she is not engaged; but the matter becomes infinitely worse when he is engaged to another.

C. W.—Shaving the head for a few months is the best preventive for baldness. Wearing nightcaps weakens the hair; and if you can, leave them off. The head was never intended to be made a mummy of every night.

J. R.—In a public ball-room, the etiquette is for the master of the ceremonies to arrange the introductions and make the visitors who are strangers acquainted with each other.

S. H.—Beware of man-traps. The party you refer to can no more show you how to realise a fortune than he can fly.

A. Z.—1. Cleanse and strengthen your hair by using distilled rosemary as a wash. 2. Cut and trim your nails often; that is the only way to strengthen them.

EGLANTINE—Would be wrong in engaging herself to a gentleman she has only seen twice. We advise her not to be too precipitate. Marriage is a lottery, and unless the character of the person she wishes to marry be well studied and learnt beforehand, there is every chance of her drawing a bad ticket. Our motto then is, "Wait a little longer."

WOMAN.—To the honour, to the eternal honour of the sex, it is stated, that on the part of duty no sacrifice is to them too high or too dear. Nothing is with them impossible, but to shrink from love, honour, innocence, and religion. The voice of pleasure or of power may pass by unheeded; but the voice of affliction—never. The chamber of the sick—the pillow of the dying—the vigils of the dead—the altar of religion, never missed the presence or the sympathies of kind woman. Timid though she be, and so delicate that the winds of heaven may not too roughly visit her, on such occasions she loses all sense of danger, and assumes a preternatural courage. Then she displays that undaunted spirit which never courts difficulties nor evades them; that resignation which utters neither murmur nor regret; and that patience in suffering which seems victorious even over death.

LITTLE CHILDREN.—People who habitually put children out of their hearts, and close their doors upon them, have no idea how much comfort they set aside—what pleasure, what amusement. Of course the little creatures meddle with things, and leave the traces of their fingers on the wall, and cry, and "bother" a little; but when one gets into the way of it, as mothers and other loving relatives do, those things become of minor importance. Children say pretty things, and do such funny things, the touch of their little hand is so soft, the sound of their little voice so sweet, their faces are so pretty, their movements so graceful and comical, the whole family goes baby-mad—and it is no wonder. No book was ever written that was half so interesting as a little child that is learning to talk and to think, that is developing from a tiny animal into a being with a conscience and a heart.

UNLUCKY ONE.—We never advise any one to give over an undertaking or pursuit in despair. Patience and perseverance will conquer the greatest difficulties, and you have a motive for persevering of the highest character. We cannot advise you how to employ your time, or what occupation to seek. We can, however, advise you to attend to your writing. Strive to acquire a better hand, and fit yourself for some lucrative employment; and, after awhile you may depend upon it, if Fortune be steadily won, she will finally be won.

Bravo Jerry! Adhere to your resolution, and grow fat upon it—if you can. We more than half suspect that you are neither one of the best nor brightest husbands in London. If you really wish to tame the shrew you are yoked to, show a little more spirit—but beware of driving. Mix the fortiter in re with a little of the suavitatem in modo. Coaxing is a wonderful persuader, especially when a man shows that he is determined.

LOVELY NELLIE.—Handwriting very good.

JANE.—Handwriting too free and bold for a female, at least according to our taste.

A Reader.—The act is still in force. It was originated by the philanthropic Earl of Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley. That peer at least has always been a friend of the people and of the poor.

T. M.—Your bacchanalian effusion flows freely, and the versification is most agreeable. It is, however, scarcely adapted to our columns, and we must therefore decline it with many thanks.

CLARA.—1. You should use olive oil for your hair. 2. Lavender flowers would impart a pleasant odour to the contents of your linen drawer. 3. Citrate of magnesia in water makes a pleasant cooling morning drink. 4. The application of glycerine to the face may be useful to the complexion, but it cannot turn a cloudy complexion into a clear one. The state of the complexion is accounted for by the nature of an individual's constitution and the condition of his health, and it is difficult to make radical alterations in those by the mere external application of even such a potent agent as glycerine.

JERRY SMITH, who writes and spells very strangely, complains of being hen-pecked, and has poured out his woes in verse:

"Drove from my home, upon a frowning world
To wander like a vagrant ever,
Or let my breeches be by women worn—
Can I submit to this? No—never."

OXFORD.—The Queen and Prince Albert visited Oxford on the University Commemoration Day, June 15, 1841. There is no record whatever concerning the other date to which you allude.

O. F.—Certainly you appear to be situated in an unpleasant dilemma. From what you say, however, we gather that matters have not progressed far with the other lady; and therefore by preference you would do well to take the lady whom you love.

C. M.—It contains much fine devotional feeling, but rather commonplace in expression. Moreover it claims to be considered in a religious rather than in a secular serial. A very sweet little poem on the like subject was written, we may remark, by Miss Alexander, a sister of the Bishop of Derry.

MAUD E.—1. No; differently arranged. 2. There are never, but apply to a good music publishers. They are not exceedingly expensive, a rudimentary one being about five or six shillings usually.

A SUMMER MORNING.
How bright are you' clouds, gay colours adorn
ing,
Golden and fleecy, they sweep o'er the sky,
Refuge they gleam in the mist of the morn-
ing,
With thoughts how estatic! their beauties
deserve.

The sun now is peeping, behind yonder mountain,
Reflecting like diamonds, the glittering dew,
His rays they are flashing, o'er river and foun-
tain,
The firmament shines in a vesture of blue.

The birds are awaking—their music is breaking,
And echoing strains, sweetly swell o'er the lea,
The Thrush, and Blackbird, their haunts are
forsaking,
To welcome Aurora! with sweet minstrelsy.

The clouds they are drifting, with golden edge
rifting,
Like bright burnished shields, in the chariot
of day,
While Sol's warm glances, Dame Nature en-
trances.
She blushes, while gazing, on the monarch of
day.

FRANCISCO.
ONCE IN A FOG.—1. If you want to paint or to stain glass, write again, and we will at once tell you. 2. The frosted appearance of ground glass may be very nearly imitated by gently dabbing the glass over with a piece of glazier's putty, stuck on the tips of the fingers. When applied with a light and even touch the resemblance is considerable.

ZINGARA.—The title of a story which recently appeared in one of the magazines. The heroine was not an actress; nor is there any necessary connection between the histrio-nic profession and poverty. In truth, the members of that profession, whether ladies or gentlemen, fare much the same as other people. There seems to be an amusing hallucination inhering in the minds of many persons on this subject.

HARRY must look out for a better sweetheart. A girl who trifles with a serious affection and coarsely holds up his avowals to ridicule, does not deserve the love of an honest man. Show a little more spirit and independence.

A COLLEGIAN complains that he has a red nose. His habits, we presume, are temperate. If so, the fault must be with his digestive organs or liver. We will give him a hint that will be of service to him and other young men. Tight lacing reddens the nose. Now, as some young men do lace tightly—wear belts or stays, to improve the figure, as they express themselves, or "hold their backs up" in rowing and cricket matches—we are not surprised at the number of young men we see with red noses. The belts worn by sailors rest on the hips, and they are sick. Jack is too wise to go about his work with his body in durance vile.

LOVING POLL.—The universal rule of life is that those persons who commit mischief, either to themselves or to other persons, are bound to repair it, and as you have been so hasty in dismissing your lover without waiting for the advice you asked for, you must expect a little mortification as a punishment. "All's well that ends well," and if you manage your cards properly you may turn the ace of hearts to secure you the game.

GOOD BREEDING.—In introducing a lady and gentleman, you should introduce the gentleman to the lady, and then the lady to the gentleman; it being a great honour to receive an introduction. Whether you shake hands or bowed to the company would depend upon your intimacy with the persons assembled.

LAURA ELLEN.—Turning music for a gentleman seated at the piano is rather a dangerous pastime. You had better be cautious, or your friends will be testing you about the politeness. As to the fact itself, we can see

no impropriety in it; but men are such impudent creatures, and when shown coquetry or allowed the least liberty, fancy they have enthrall'd the lady's heart.

FLIRT.—Your name is well chosen, most certainly, we should say from your letter. It seems this young lady has broken her engagement with a young gentleman because he forbade her writing to any gentleman but himself. Now she begins to fear she has lost her lover, and wants to know if we think it would be too great a concession if she should write to him and ask him to call on her. We think the concession would be entirely too small. You should send him an apology for refusing to comply with his request. We hope this will be a lesson to you, and you will learn that the true love of one good man is of greater value than the admiration of half the world.

GEORGE.—Young ladies who drink vinegar to subdue their greatest charm in the eyes of most men—a tendency to embonpoint—do so at the expense of a red nose, which provokes a horrible suspicion, a livid circle under each eye, an impaired digestion, and general debility.

MIRA, twenty, medium height, fresh colour, passable in looks, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man about twenty-five, who must be dark complexioned, fond of home, and tolerably good looking.

KETTLE DRUMMER, a soldier in the Line, twenty-two, dark complexion, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be fair and good looking.

CLARKE, twenty-five, having a prosperous business, tall, dark, wishes to correspond with a respectable mechanic, who must be tall and a little older than herself; looks no object, if he is respectable and steady, and would make such a man a good wife; respondent must be a resident in or near Birmingham and a strict Protestant.

JOB, twenty, handsome, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, medium height, would like to correspond with a thoroughly respectable young lady of amiable disposition, about nineteen or twenty, with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

SILVER is responded to by—Zeno, thirty, fair, and rather short, holding a government appointment.

LILLIAN by—G. S., who thinks he is all she requires.

M. A. S. by—Valentine, a lawyer's clerk, twenty, tall, slight, considered very good looking, loving disposition, fond of music and dancing, and thinks he is all she requires.

A. Z. by—Sunshine, twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes, very fair complexion, considered good looking, and would make a loving wife.

T. L. by—Daisy, twenty-one, medium height, brown hair and eyes, dark complexion, loving, and fond of home.

JAMES by—Edith, twenty-three, tall, dark, bright eyes, would make a good wife, and thinks she is all she requires.

CARINE by—G. B.

FAIR LILLIAN by—Joe, twenty-one, dark complexion, fond of home, wishes to commence business for himself, is a total abstainer, fond of music, and would make her a good husband.

NELLIE by—G. O.

NORA by—A. A. C., who thinks he is all she requires.

SAUCY NELL by—Royal Truck, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-three, dark, good looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home, and who thinks he is all she requires.

LAURENCE and EMILY by—Daring Tom and Dancing Bill. Daring Tom is twenty, medium height, very good looking, dark gray eyes. Dancing Bill is eighteen, medium height.

ANNIE by—Alpha, tall, thirty-one, brown hair and eyes, fond of home.

A. B. C. by—Frederick, who is slightly older, and has some means,

MARY ANN H. by—J. H. L., twenty-one, tall, fair, a traveller for a leading house.

FANNIE by—A Bachelor, twenty-nine, fond of home amusements, light complexion, sociable disposition, musical, thinks it quite time he was settled, and thinks he is all she requires.

SISTER by—Saxon, medium height, fair, good looking, and fond of home.

ALL THE BACK NUMBERS, PARTS AND VOLUMES of the "LONDON READER" are in print and may be had at the Office, 31, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom Post-free for Three-halfpence, Eight-pence, and Five Shillings and One Shilling each.

THE LONDON READER, Post-free, Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

LIFE AND FASHION, Vols. 1 and 2, Price Seven Shillings and Sixpence each.

EVANSBOTH'S JOURNAL, Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence.

* Now Ready VOL. XXVI. of THE LONDON READER Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL XXVI., Price One Shilling.

NOTICE.—Part 160 (JULY) Now Ready, Price Sixpence, post-free Eightpence.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS to the EDITOR of "THE LONDON READER," 31, Strand, W.C.

* We cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should return copies.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 31, Strand, G. A. SMITH.

